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ABSOLUTE UNDERGROUND

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Ad Design - Brady Tighe, Mark Pye
Photo Collages / DNR Bookshelf - Demonika
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Web Masters - Danny Deane, John Warnock

COVER ART - Robin Thompson
COVER DESIGN - CHADSOLUTE

Writers - Ira Hunter, Brady Tighe, Dan Potter, Ed Sum, Vince D'Amato, Chuck Andrews, Jason Flower, Julia Veintrop, Dustin Jak, Clark Mantei, Jason Lamb, Erik Lindholm, Jon Asher, Grayson Caligari, Raymond MacKay, Claude Montreuil, Billy Hopeless, Michael Cushing, Demonika, Ryan Dyer, Dustin Wiebe, John Carlow, Doug Smart, Anthony Nadeau, Brydon Parker, Heath Fenton, Lance Hall
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 Crossword - Paul Gott

Transcription - Stevinator, Amanda Lawrence, Erik Lindholm, Jared Amos, Tara Zamalynski, Trevor L. Reid, Sheldon Byer,
Interns - Apply to info@absoluteunderground.ca

Logo Design - Dirty Donny

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Absolute Underground
 PO Box 48076, Victoria, BC V8Z 7H5
 info@absoluteunderground.ca
 www.absoluteunderground.tv

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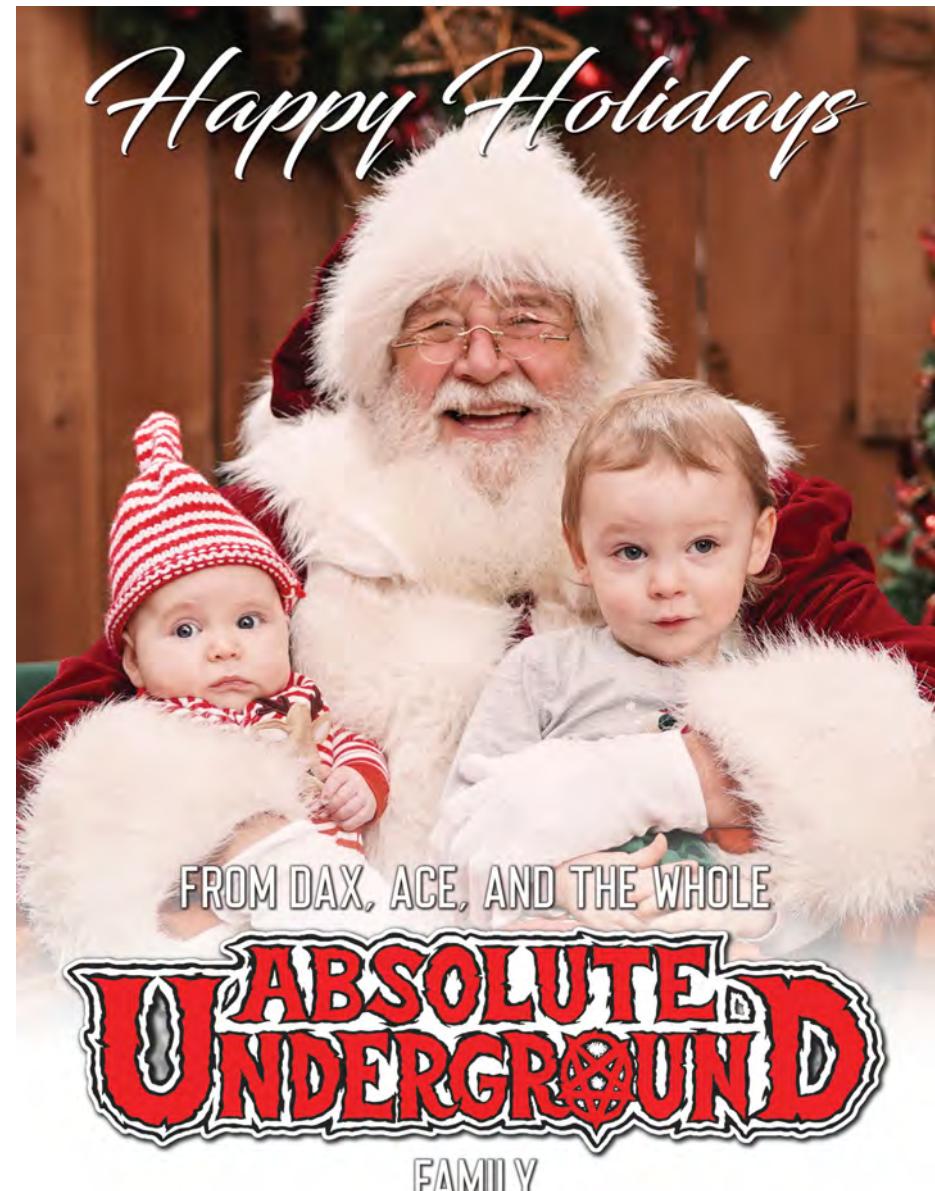
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THE CHAIN

Nothing to Do with Fleetwood Mac

By John Carlow

Absolute Underground: Please Introduce yourselves!

TC:

Sully-Guitar
Marty-Bass
Aldous-Drums/vocals

AU: How did The Chain come together?

TC: We (Aldous and Marty) were good friends all through middle school and we loved music. We invited Sully, who Aldous had known since elementary school to join. We started practicing with no clue what we were really doing. We were just doing it for fun.

AU: Where did the name come from? And does Fleetwood Mac mess with that name and your searchability?

TC: We thought of it for no other reason than we



AU: What bands have inspired your sound?

TC: We've been heavily influenced by: Ramones, The Chats, The Dead Kennedys, No Means No, and SHARON. One of the most influential records to me (Aldous) was Fresh Fruit for Rotting

thought in sounded cool. It really has no deep meaning or anything. Looking back it's kind of stupid, but it stuck. We get asked a lot if the name is related to that (Fleetwood Mac) song. Honestly, they have nothing to do with each other. I completely forgot about that song when naming the band. I'm sure it messes people up trying to find us online but oh well. We've been asked if we're a Fleetwood Mac cover band a few times. Its kind of funny since I don't think we could be any more different.

AU: Where did you learn to play?

TC: We all have been taking music lessons throughout our lives. Marty is an amazing

trombone player as well as bass. Aldous takes drum lessons and just plays along to his favourite music. Records like Milo Goes to College have really inspired his sound. Sully is a whole other story. He's been playing guitar since before he could crawl. If you ask his mom, he came out of the womb shredding the axe.

Vegetables. That was kind of the record where I went "holy shit this is awesome." It really inspired me to want to start a band.

AU: How many shows have you played?

TC: Around 10 or 11. We've played a lot of different venues but I think the Little Fernwood is definitely where we play the most. We love playing there cause not only is it where a lot of all ages shows are happening right now but it's just such a cool place with an involved community. We've also played the Carlton Club, Upstairs Cabaret, Oaklands Community Centre, Lucky Bar and Victoria Event Centre.

AU: Tell us about your first show in front of an audience?

TC: Our first show was at the James Bay community picnic. We had never done anything close to a show before and we were excited to take any show we could get. It was a disaster. We were told there would be a full drum set and everything but when we got there Aldous played on one of those little toy kits you get from Canadian Tire. Aldous was scared he was going to destroy that kit the whole time. We played to a giant mob of 6-year-olds. Even Marty the Marmot, the Victoria Royals mascot was there. There's probably a video out there.

AU: Anything unusual / funny happen at any of your shows to date?

TC: We like to have fun with our shows. That's really what we're all about. We wear silly glasses and do funny dances and we are just there to play music and have a good time.

AU: Is the band's age a barrier or does it help focus people towards you?

TC: Our age is definitely inconvenient sometimes. We've opened for some totally awesome legendary band like the Dayglo Abortion and Ramones but we haven't been able to actually see them because of the 19+ age restrictions. It sucks to be billed with all these amazing bands and not get to watch them live...but that's life. We don't really



PUNKTORIA

Producing a Local Punk Compilation

By Aeryn Shrapnel

Vic City Vinyl is set to put out a Victoria

compilation next year to promote local punk bands. Produced by Victoria's own Darren Westwood and Eric Altshuler, Punktoria will have 10-12 previously unreleased tracks from local bands like Bug, NeuroSpazm, The Resistance and more.

"The bands that we've been talking to are very diverse in their sounds...it goes from rock to more melodic punk, which is one of my favourite styles," Westwood says.

Westwood is fairly new to punk, spending most of his life listening to more well-known



artists like The Eagles, but caught the punk bug about six years ago after connecting with some friends in Los Angeles. "I mean, I've known it's been around. I think I saw the Dayglo Abortions in 1983, the first year they played... and then I disappeared from that world. One of my best friends down [in L.A.] ran a punk store on Melrose for years and years and we became really good friends. I started connecting with the Orange County garage punk/surf punk kind of scene and really enjoyed that. Once I came home I started snooping around and connecting with the local talent, and I just got to thinking that I hadn't seen a lot of vinyl out there," Westwood says.

After helping some friends produce their own record, Westwood and Altshuler created Vic City Vinyl and decided to work on a compilation project featuring local talent.

The album cover will be designed by L.A. graphics artist Kenney Garrett, aka SahLugg, who has done album covers for bands like 999, The Partisans, Alcoholics and Mad Parade. Garrett is known for his gritty, electric style of screen-printing rooted in old school techniques that have mostly been lost to digitalization. "When I go down to get the screens burned at the screen-printing place and the guy sees the art, he's like, 'Do you need me to clean this up?' and I say no. I'm all tape marks, staples, everything that's visual, that's the way it goes. So, they don't even ask me anymore," Garrett says.

Bug front-man and Howl Brewery owner Dan van Netten is excited to be a part of this compilation. Van Netten says, "There's a lot of bands that over the years might only have like a demo or something and it just kind of vanishes over time. I think it helps unify [the scene] and I think it's

always kind of neat to cross-promote each other's music as well."

While Westwood has come across some naysayers, he's mostly found support in the scene. Westwood says, "It's not costing bands anything. Me and my buddies are fronting the project funding and the bands are each going to get some records to sell and it's just going to be fun. I know you're not going to be a millionaire by being in punk, but you're having fun doing it and damn the rest of

the world, you know?"

According to Westwood, there may be enough interest from both bands and record stores to produce more compilations in the future. "We're looking for local bands and unreleased material. Everything that's going to be on here has never been published or put on vinyl before. So, the fans of all the different bands will probably gravitate towards it because it'll be something new," he says.

viccityvinyl.com



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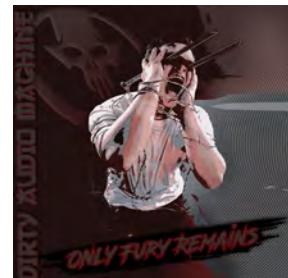
DIRTY AUDIO MACHINE

Only Fury Remains

Interview with Guitarist Steve Ricardo

Absolute Underground: The band just released its second EP this past summer: Only Fury Remains, what can you tell us about this record?

Dirty Audio Machine: It's a mood setter. I have been inundating my ears with heavy old-school metal: Venom, UFO, Old Slayer, Exodus. So, the inspiration and the textiles were there, and I had a foundation to start the riffs and structure. To light the fire, look around you, The world is getting angry and it's going to blow up like a powder keg. People only have aggression and Fury!!!



AU: We read that this record is about life's challenges and making it one day at a time. The album's artwork is showing the end of mankind, the struggle, and the anger. What's your take on the way of the world?

DAM: What can I say? Read the papers or watch CNN: Europe, Asia, Russia, Korea, TikTok, cops, humans, "Karens", killing, shooting, lying, cheating...you name it we humans are turning against each other. No more brotherhood, no more trust. We struggle, we are beaten, starved,

AU: What would you like fans to take away from "Only Fury Remains"?

DAM: Fight for your rights and beliefs, be strong, and stand for what you believe in. Do not surrender to pressures from either the media, a TikTok influencer, a YouTube influencer, or people who don't have a leg to stand on. It's all lies! Watch out for YOU.

AU: With the band situated in the groove metal sub-genre, and with Pantera's return to performing live again, do you feel that there will be a big resurgence of this sound?

DAM: The Groove part of metal lives on in every genre of metal. That riff that bops your head at 120 bpm, 180 bpm, it's around us. I love feeling that hook and taking the audience on a ride. Light 'em up and Getcha' pull!

AU: You're a seasoned musician known for his work with Green Jello and Bif Naked. How is touring and performing with Dirty Audio Machine compared to your times with your previous acts?

DAM: Green Jello was like a 15-year-old kid on Ritalin, 4x4-ing a jeep in deep country all while trying to have sex for the 1st time. Then we have Bif Naked, which was more like a fun pillow party. Then we have Dirty Audio Machine, and I am older now and I'd think more responsible. A much more controlled "To Serve and Destroy" kind of

and manipulated every day. Governments are squeezing the life out of us. 15 years ago, I could say we had 3 tiers of people. Lower, Upper, Rich. Now? Lower and the rich. World War III is on the doorstep and ready to ring the doorbell.

feel. We have been told that some bands do not want to go on after us.

AU: This is the Xmas issue... What is Dirty Audio Machine asking from Santa this year?

DAM: Hell, world peace!! Seriously though, for shit to calm down so we can all just listen to metal!!

AU: What are the band's plans for 2024? New music? Touring?

DAM: Mid-December we'll start writing guitar for our next EP. We have a lot of riffs.

VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

AU: Is there anything else you would like to add for readers?

DAM: If you want change, push for it. One person can start a ripple, and thousands of people can start a tidal wave!! Metal to the masses!! dirtyaudiomachine.bandcamp.com



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DEGENERATOR

The Abyssal Throne

Interview with Barrett Klesko (Vocals, Guitar, Bass)

AU: Degenerator features members of Barrett Klesko of All Else Fails, and Jonathan Webster from Pass of Era, ex- Striker, how did you two come together to create the band?

Degenerator: Jono and I played together for a few years in The Order of Chaos until it disbanded. We talked around that time about starting a new project, so when the idea of this band popped up, Jono was the first drummer who came to mind. He's an excellent drummer with a great understanding of this genre, and he did an amazing job on this album.

AU: You've been quoted as saying "Degenerator is a sonic experiment that I conducted to unleash the noise that was haunting my mind," what more in-depth

details can you tell us about this new band and the new album The Abyssal Throne?

D: I had the sound of this album in my head long before we started writing it. I think I've always looked for the same thing in music; a deep, warm, enveloping sound. Having never really found it, this project began as an experiment to create what I was searching for. To that end, I started out by collecting the same gear that was used on The Smashing Pumpkins' Siamese Dream, and then I added a few new pieces (amps and pedals specifically) to bring more low end into the tones. Once I had that, I asked Jono to send some early drum tracks over so that I could start experimenting with tonality. It turned out that he sent over the tracks he was working on for Pass of Era, and basically, I wrote a totally different album over them. He went back and redid the drums again to better suit the music once it was complete, but it's cool that there are two albums with completely different sounds that have essentially the same structure.

AU: You've talked about wanting to capture the essence of the old Smashing Pumpkins, what about that band and others from the '90s grunge era attracted you to be influenced by them?

D: That's the music I grew up on, and it is so greatly engraved in my musical tastes that I wanted to create something that referenced and paid homage to it, while still possessing its own identity. I will always love the mix of raw power and refined tones that the best of the grunge bands delivered.

AU: The album steps out from your previous genres of metalcore, punk, and heavy metal, sounding more a blend of stoner, doom, grunge, goth, and prog elements. Did you find this took you both out of your comfort zones and was it a bit of self-music exploration?

D: It wasn't uncomfortable by any means, the opposite in fact. This album took a lot of work, but I loved every minute of writing it. I have probably listened to it an unhealthy amount at this point, but I feel we were successful in creating the sound I started out to create. I'm very much drawn to pushing myself to create new sounds and work within new genres.

AU: With AI Artwork and Videos becoming more the norm for bands to promote their music, how did you make the decision to go AI instead of using a graphic artist and director for real production?

D: Some people may not know that in my life I am also a photographer and videographer. In the past I have done the production on my



SHR-EDMONTON

band's releases, no difference here, but this time I wanted to challenge myself to create something within the constraints of current AI image and video creation. Telling a story with moving images that can't truly be directed is deeply challenging, and I love the outcome. With how quickly the tech is moving, these videos will probably date quickly, but I couldn't be happier with the outcome. As for the band photo, that one is the result of hundreds of AI generations, and is mixed with practical photo editing of real images of myself and Jono, so it straddles a different line than a vanilla AI generation.

AU: Will the band be making a live debut in the near future?

D: We have no plans currently, but I would never rule it out in the future.

AU: Is there anything else you would like to add for our readers?

D: I want to note that I won't be running social channels for this project, but I'll share news through my All Else Fails accounts, so please follow us there to keep up to date, and drop me a line, I'd love to hear how people are enjoying the album. If you like the album, please support our endeavors by buying it on our Bandcamp - degeneratormusic.bandcamp.com.



CALGARY CARNAGE



BLACK PESTILENCE

Chaotic Wisdom

Interview with Band Leader Valax

Absolute Underground: Welcome back to Absolute Underground Mag, for those unfamiliar with Black Pestilence, who are you, and what do you do?

Black Pestilence: We are a three-piece, black metal/punk band from Calgary, AB. The band originally started in 2008 as a one-man studio project by myself, Valax, and eventually turned into a full live band in 2010.

AU: Black Pestilence is back with a new album Chaotic Wisdom, it's your first since 2020's Hail the Flesh, what can you tell us about it?

BP: Chaotic Wisdom is Satanic d-beat. The music is formulated around typical punk rock song

structures while being projected through the playing style of black metal. Greater emphasis was placed on the samples used on this album, in the form of additional percussion and cacophonous electronics.

AU: We loved your music videos for 'Devil's Connection' and 'Mortal Rift'. How did you come up with the visual ideas for the videos and can we expect more?

BP: For "The Devil's Connection" we didn't want to do a performance or storyline video because that was already the concept for "Mortal Rift." One night we were chatting about possible ideas that we hadn't done in previous videos. For a while, I had envisioned doing a time-lapse-style video of the three of us walking around downtown. That loose concept developed into us walking through an alleyway filmed in one take.

The concept and visuals behind "Mortal Rift"

are the work of our good friend Erik from Wikked Twist Media. I sent him the lyrics to the song and gave him total creative control over the storyline, visuals, directing, and editing.

AU: You're genre dubbed as Black 'n' Roll or Satanic d-beat, how do you find balance with black metal fans and punk fans with your sound?

BP: It's not easy. As expected, people are quick to judge, especially when they haven't heard our music and have only seen what we look like. However, once they hear the music or come to a show, it makes much more sense to them. Visually, we look like a metal band, but in terms of sonics we sound closer to punk with black metal vocals. There will always be people who don't like the mixture of these two genres and that's completely fine. It is a blessing in disguise, as we get booked on both punk and black metal shows quite frequently. It took a while, but now people understand our music regardless of the primary genre of the show we are booked on.

AU: Many of the song lyrics touch base on various themes related to Satanic philosophy, societal stratification, and general debauchery? What is about these that draws you to write music about it?

BP: For over half my life I have been a firm supporter of Satanic philosophy. It's a responsible individualist mentality. Naturally, it makes sense to write about how this perspective shapes my worldview. Social issues have also

been something I have always written about as well. Especially on Chaotic Wisdom, societal stratification was a topic I wanted to address in light of many different world events that have taken place over the past couple of years. I will always be inspired by current events in order to help aid with inspiration for lyrical topics. As far as general debauchery goes, that's a lot more fun to write about than just a boring love song.

AU: You recently completed your tour of Western Canada with Calgary's Citizen Rage. How did your bands team up for this tour and how was the overall road? Are there plans for future touring in Canada or beyond?

BP: For the last year or so, I have been telling Mark Russell (vocalist for Citizen Rage) that we would like to tour with them. We have been fans of each other's bands for quite some time now and

played many punk shows together in the past. The writing was on the wall so we decided to make it happen. It ended up being an excellent tour for both bands. Yes, we are planning to make it out to Eastern Canada and the States. Nothing is confirmed yet for either of those locations.

AU: Is there anything else you would like to add for our readers?

BP: If you haven't checked out Chaotic Wisdom yet, it's available on all streaming platforms and is available on CD and cassette via the Black Pestilence Bandcamp (blackpestilence.bandcamp.com/). There are also some leftover t-shirts from the tour available on there as well. Until next time, we'll see you on the road somewhere!

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ARTIST PROFILE



ALICE SIMICICH

Multi-Platform Artist, Smooth Operator

Interview by Absolute Underground

AU: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for?

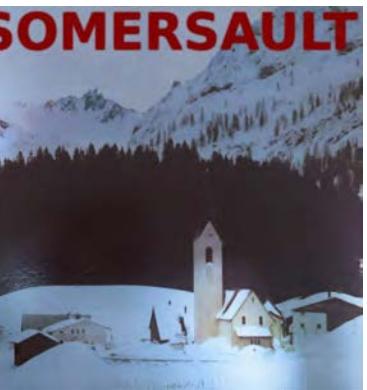
Alice Simicich: My name is Alice. I am likely most known for being a carpenter, a curator, and a smooth operator.

AU: How long have you been an artist? What got you started?

AS: I'm not sure entirely, I've got a real goose-on-the-loose understanding when it comes to art but I'd say in 2018 when I was in year 10, and me and a friend were huddled in their basement for months trying to make some experimental concept album that never saw the light of day.

AU: How would you describe the art you create?

AS: Rather self-serious, also expansive and singular, maybe a little self-indulgent. I don't think many people have self-produced a record quite like my most recent one, before the age of twenty.



AU: What are some of the major influences on your artistic style?

AS: Mostly movies, I liked Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, and The Last Unicorn when I was a baby. I like very rudimentary stories, they're the most compelling.

AU: Your art covers a variety of mediums, which ones do you

enjoy working with the most?

AS: Music has been the apple of my eye for most years, and I have great passion for it, but most recently my sights have been set on new horizons. Live performance is the sweetest pleasure of all though, and whether it's in sport or art- there isn't a time where I feel more viscerally free of any restraint. Especially when you can do it with those you love

AU: What sort of music do you listen to when working on your artwork?

AS: I am listening to lots of instrumental music right now because I am writing a book. I'm particularly enjoying the soundtrack to Ico, Charles Mingus, Hallelujah, Don't bend! Ascend! Also plenty of The Damned and New York proto-punk, of course.

AU: You recently released an album, what was it like recording and releasing that?

AS: It was wonderful, and very difficult. It took three years, but nearly all the recordings are from the past year and were made after shifts doing high-rise carpentry. The heart of the album is very

much a thank-you to people I've met, and also the ebb and flow of living.

AU: Is there a concept behind the album?

AS: A scientist tries to create god. The story follows the connection between the scientist, creation, and a guardian angel.

AU: Has anyone tattooed your art on themselves?

AS: No, but I have a perpetual motion machine tattooed on me as homage to the era of my life that I worked on the LP.

AU: If you weren't an artist, what would you want to be?

AS: Everyone's an artist monsieur. I only wish I could dedicate myself to a single craft, though. Like, stone masonry or textiles or swimming or teaching. Instead I am cursed to pursue it all. I have much respect for those true masters of their respective field and purpose.

AU: Upcoming plans?

AS: I am writing a book. The Quietus of Isaac Boncoeur. I'm most interested by Faustian tragedies right now, which is the archetype of my recent works. I plan on adapting this two-act book into a video-game afterwards, but I must not get ahead of myself!

AU: What's the weirdest thing you've seen in public recently?

AS: Unfortunately, I am quite the recluse besides my current work as a landscaper and have no such stories. I'll take this as a sign to seek out public oddities.



AU: Where can people find you online?

AS: Instagram @s0mersaultr is the platform I use most- though I am not particularly present online. If you are someone with unquenchable fervor for music and the arts- please feel free to reach out to collaborate or otherwise.



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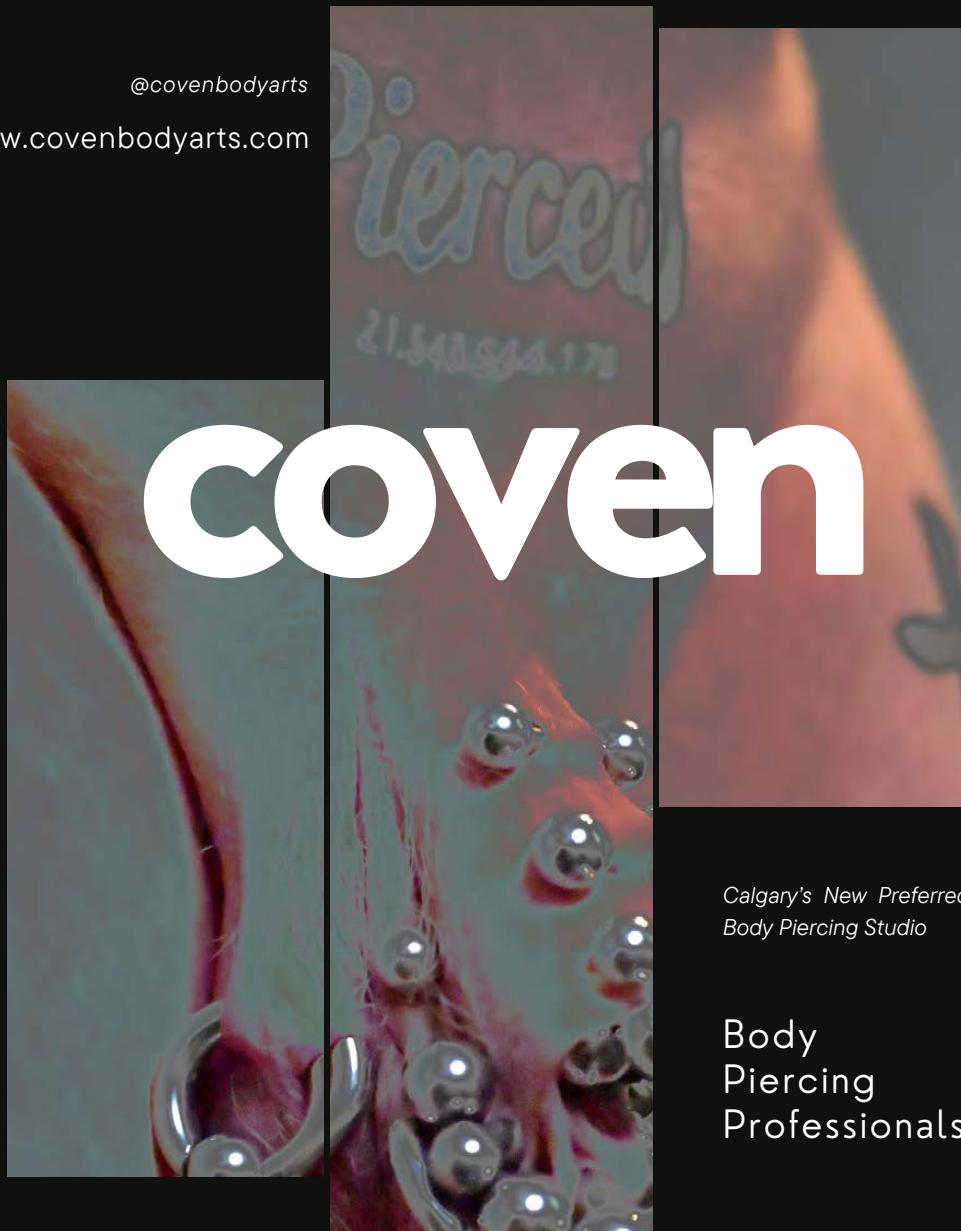
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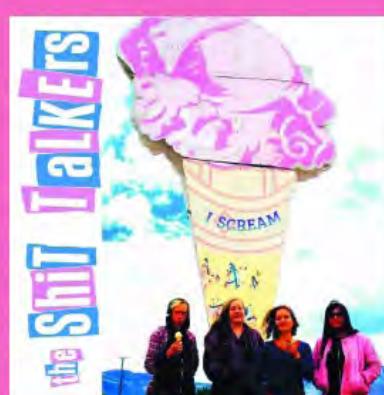


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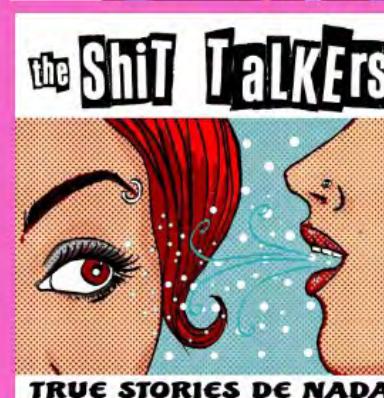
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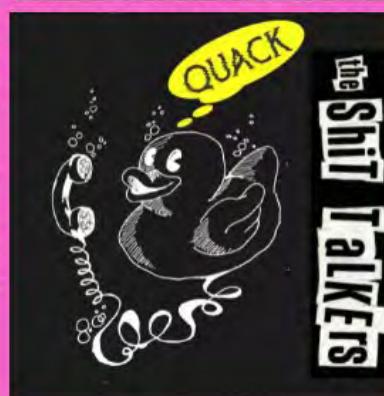
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DISORIENTATION

Survival Mode

Interview with Marie-Claude Fleury and Daniel Daris

Absolute Underground: Disorientation is quite an interesting duo, your avant-garde experimentation was truly refreshing. How did this project come together?

Disorientation: We are both into dissonant music and we wanted to write music based on that. Starting in 2010, we occasionally recorded riffs, and we eventually had a few incomplete songs lying around. Then in late 2019 we decided we should get moving and we put the finishing touches to the 3 songs that appeared on our self-titled EP that we released in 2021. After that, we completed the 3 songs that will appear on our upcoming EP Survival Mode. The delay is due to the other musical projects we are involved with.

AU: You have a new EP out, Survival Mode, what can you tell us about how this EP compares to your 2021 self-titled debut?

DIS: We can use the cliché that Survival Mode is a more experienced version of us. We used the knowledge we gained while self-recording our first EP and applied it to this effort. The music in



Survival Mode is generally faster, more direct, and in-your-face than what you can hear in Disorientation. We decided to get a little bolder with vocal lines and added a few English horn lines, which have a more melancholic tone than the oboe. Those specific songs required a different and clearer sound, so we chose to have the mixing and mastering done by Hugues Deslauriers from Roarr Sound Studios.

AU: How do you come up with the musical concepts?

DIS: We never really thought of ourselves as "avant-garde" until we started promoting our first EP and some radio stations said they couldn't play Epilogue on their show because it was too avant-garde. To write music, we can take a riff and not necessarily repeat it 4 times, or we can change its shape, invert it, etc. It has also happened that followed the lyrical narrative and created music that fit the various moods as the story unfolds, adding some unexpected variations because, in life, nothing is linear.

AU: What has inspired the band's unique sound and use of unorthodox instruments not usually used in extreme music such as the Oboe and English Horn?

DIS: Since I started playing oboe when I was 13 years old, I wanted to incorporate it with metal, as to me the specific tonal quality of the instrument was very appropriate for metal music, even though I had never heard that kind of mix before.

AU: Has the band found it easy to perform with other extreme metal bands in Montreal and other parts of Quebec? In other words, what is the band's Survival Mode to get seen and heard when you stand out from the norm?

DIS: Since we have only two members, we have not played any shows yet, but this is something we want to do: play live in front of an audience, we want to get a lineup together for that.

We expect that not everybody will want to book us because we don't really fit into a precise category.

AU: This interview will be in the X-Mas issue, if Santa can give the band one out-of-the-norm instrument to experiment with for your next record, what would you ask for?

DIS: I would like to experiment with the bass oboe, which is a very rare instrument, even in orchestral music. Aside from some contemporary works, it appears in Gustav Holst's Planets. Another rare instrument I would like is a piccolo oboe. Its higher register would add an extra

color to our music.

AU: Is there anything else you would like our readers to know or add about Disorientation?

DIS: Don't let anybody tell you what to think about our music. Listen to it yourself and make your own opinion based on that.



MONTRÉAL MASSACRE

color to our music.

AU: Is there anything else you would like our readers to know or add about Disorientation?

DIS: Don't let anybody tell you what to think about our music. Listen to it yourself and make your own opinion based on that.

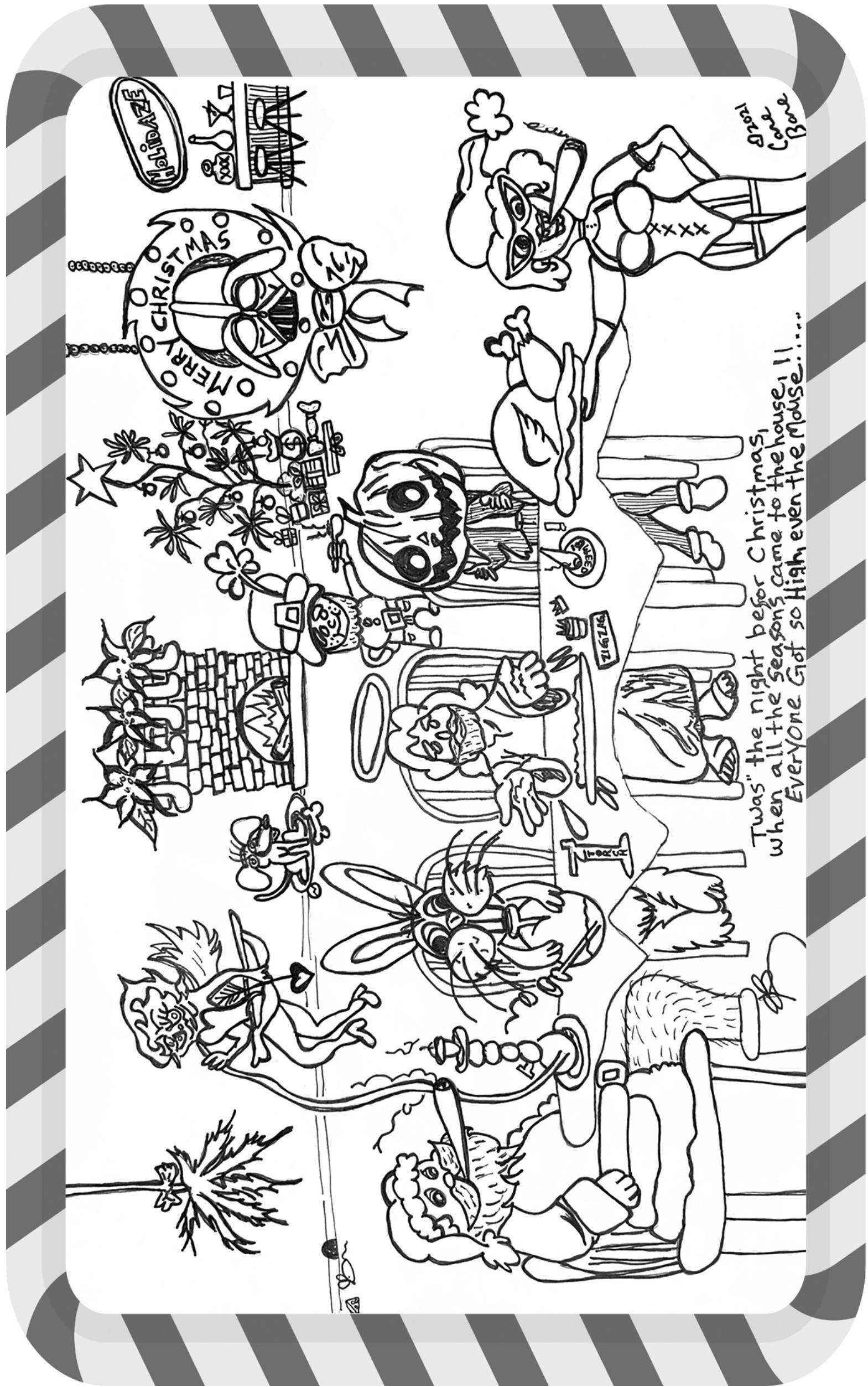
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DIRTY BIRD

Crucial Truth

Band Interview by Absolute Underground

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?

Dirty Bird: It's awesome to chat with Absolute Underground again, we have some great memories with you guys. Our former singer Uncle Anus did a bunch of interviews, there was one really great one with Spider, and we had a few racy ads when our album "Seeks" came out. "Everyone gets a piece of ass," ring a bell?

Drums: Dave G.

"Low-Key": Bass James F. Quattro

Vox: Johnny Piranha

Guitar: Richard Shakes III

AU: Please give us a brief history of your band.

DB: Dirty Bird has been blasting the satanic powers of hardcore since 1992. We never went away, we just went into remission temporarily, like that nasty bout of herpes you got hanging out in dockside bars. We've gone through various lineup changes, and this current lineup is the strongest we've had in over 30 years.



We've got a new album in the pipe for release in 2024. The whole album is written and ready for the studio. The shows we played in the last couple months have been the most intense we can remember. We're playing faster and heavier than we've ever played. We sound like the engine of a 1994 Acura NSX at 8000 RPM with a blown piston. These days we're really focusing on making our live set a bit like getting run over by a train, that's the idea. Our new singer Johnny Piranha is a big fan of the classic punk rock gang vocal. At any live show, it's the most fun for someone in the crowd being at the front of the stage seeing a band they love, when the singer shoves the mic in their face so they can belt out the hook of the song. We love that experience of how close it brings us to the crowd.

AU: What is your creative process like?

DB: We write songs together as a band. It starts with one riff, then another, then our signature drum beat with punches, then vocal lines and lyrics. We work out the kinks, maybe add a few more parts. A song that would last 4 minutes with most bands in this genre lasts 2 because we play so goddamn fast. For

some reason, the older we get, the faster we're playing, and we plan on keeping the pedal to the metal till the wheels fall off.

AU: Have you released an album or any songs recently?

DB: The last thing we released was a killer 7" in 2019 called "Crucial Truths", it's on all streaming

platforms, along with our last album "Seeks" and "Greatest Tits" and a bunch of other shit from the last 30 years.

AU: In your opinion, what is wrong with the music scene now?

DB: The youth today don't have the same opportunity to discover or fall in love with punk rock and hardcore bands. While the internet has provided the ability to discover new bands easily, there has been a decrease in all ages shows, and the new generations can't see many of those bands. When we were growing up you bought the album or record at 15 or 16 years old and got to fall in love with the bands at all ages shows and get your angst out in the pit. These days most venues that cater to the punk and hardcore scene don't do all ages shows which we think hurts the future of the genres. We believe in growing the scene and community, and that really comes down to two words: New blood.

AU: What are some of things your band does to give back to the community?

DB: We play benefit shows for stuff we believe in. We hope to continue to raise money for good causes. We've always done our best to network with independent artists in our community to promote the success of venues that keep the music scene alive.

AU: What are some of your best songs about?

DB: Our songs have always been about things we like, and also serious shit like what we're pissed off about, and then probably half our songs are about drinking. We've been around for 30 years, so when we do shows we make sure to make it count: play for people who love getting thrown around in the pit as much as we like fucking

TORONTO TRASH

tearing through the hits. Topping charts and breaking hearts.

AU: What's the music scene like in Toronto these days?

DB: People are thirsty for shows...we were worried people stopped coming out for good, but this clearly isn't the case. Our first few shows since then have been deadly, people are starving for old school thrashing in front of a live band that's tearing and making their ears bleed.

AU: Any shows or tours planned?

DB: Our next shows are Saturday December 23rd in Hamilton at Vertigo, and Saturday January 20th in Toronto at See-Scape. We're planning a lot more throughout Canada in 2024. We love

the West Coast, see you soon. We're veterans for touring and travel, reach out to us, we want to play your town no matter where you are.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? Anything else to promote?

DB: Bands survive from merch sales. We print our own shirts, hoodies, make our own patches, we make everything on the merch table. We also hire outside independent artists to design as much of it as we can. Come to one of our shows, buy our merch and we'll give you a hug, a high five, and a show you won't forget.

AU: How do people find you online?

DB: You can find us at your local sperm bank, and also Instagram and Facebook.

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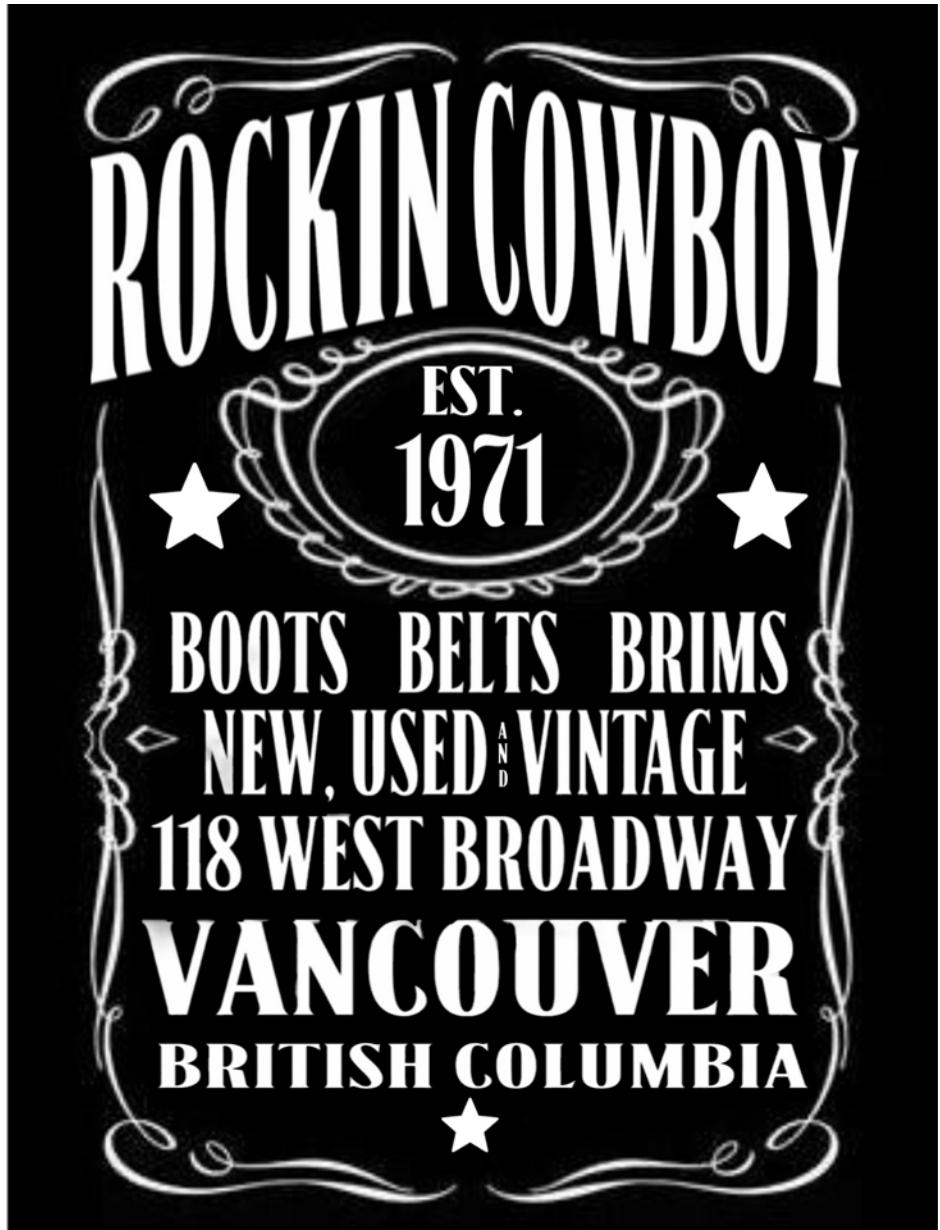
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DISANXIAN- Organic Raw Punk from Shenzhen

Interview with Terry Ye (vocals)

By Ryan Dyer

The tech-city of Shenzhen, China, is known for being one of the more modern cities in the country. With modernity comes modern people with modern problems and when going deep within China's Silicon Valley, the cracks begin to reveal themselves and something has to give. Bands like Disanxian use the tech tools of crust, d-beat, punk and crossover to create a commentary on issues both domestic and abroad. The band has been active since 2015 and can't be stopped - even with vocalist Terry Ye moving across the ocean to Calgary, Canada. Ye speaks about the state of the band, differences between Canadian and Chinese fans and venues and the scene in Shenzhen.



Absolute Underground: Disanxian has been around since 2015, what's the origin of the band's name?

Terry Ye: I have to say this band name started as a joke. Takeshi (ex-Macrochord, Alpha Helix, Jet Boys), our original drummer, had a weird idea when we were having night snacks together. He said we might take the "Dis" prefix from Chinese cuisine Disanxian() to start a d-beat (discore, stenchcore, crust) band as most of these bands paid homage to the godfather Discharge and were named after them with "Dis". That probably triggered a general concept that Disanxian was meant to be all about jokes and satirical things around us.

AU: What was the scene like at the time in Shenzhen? Who were the other notable bands in the city? What were some of the main venues? Are they still around?

TY: There was absolutely zero "scene" when we started this band. Now, hardcore, especially new school hardcore, is big in Shenzhen. Some of the bands active are The Woks (proto-punk, old school punk), Shoot the Gun (metallic moshcute), and What a Beautiful Day (melodic hardcore.) I have to admit all venues except the world-renowned B10 all suck bags of dicks! Charges are ridiculously high to organizers but they do nothing in promoting the bands and culture. All they care about is money!

AU: Did you have ties to the Hong Kong scene as well?

TY: Yes. I graduated in Hong Kong, and have been in contact ever since. We had shows in almost all the tiny venues in Hong Kong. Besides Disanxian,



our members formed the band M.E.A.T.S (fastcore, grindcore) with some Hong Kong punx too.

AU: How do you feel about the crust/punk/thrash scenes in Shenzhen now?

TY: It's funny to see after years, but the scene did not grow that much. Extreme music without pleasant melodies makes it really hard to fit in with most major music fans.

AU: You played with notable bands like Hell City and Dummy Toys. Who was or is your favorite Chinese punk band?

TY: Demerit for sure! They are still speaking for the poor and weak, and act like real punx ought to act.

AU: Disanxian's debut album, *The Greatest Outrageous Famine*, was released in 2017. What did you want to say about the famine, and how did it tie into modern times?

TY: I mixed Takeshi Kitano's Outrage with the "The Great Famine" in '60's China with the title's wordplay, trying to revoke the recognition of how inhumane the authoritarianism can be. Nothing changes in the 2020s, things are worse now, as everyone saw with the COVID lockdowns.

As a heads-up, we are now recording a new album called *The Ultimate AgriKVlTural Revolution*. The album continuously imposes infamous images from the nationwide oppression of the Cultural Revolution led by Mao Zedong in '60's - '70's China.

AU: What is your status with the band right now since you moved to Calgary?

TY: Disanxian never stops. I had Demonslaught 666's frontman Puppy sing for the band when I was away from that region.

AU: What differences do you find in the venues and fans in Canada compared to China?

TY: Venues in Calgary are great in size, well

ABSOLUTE ASIA

organized, really know the culture, and are willing to promote. Fans are way calmer than I expected, as the hardcore crowd I was used to was extremely crazy with moshing, crowd killing, skanking, or even people doing kung-fu kicks.

AU: You toured several cities in China. What were your favorite places and venues?

TY: Vox and Wuhan Prison (Yes, the COVID city. Run by Chinese punk legend SMZB), DMC (in Qingdao, run by Demerit).

AU: Have you started any musical projects in Calgary yet?

TY: I would love to, after I successfully find a job! Some friends from gigs have invited me to start bands too.

AU: Tell me about Dizine:

TY: I started Dizine as soon as Disanxian was formed. The initial idea was a webzine to promote obscure bands I knew from different regions. I used Dizine to book shows too.

AU: Disanxian just released the Canton Thrashcore Triad: Disanxian (Crust/D-Beat) + VENT (Thrashcore/Crossover) + Diarrhea (Hardcore punk). What are some details regarding this release?

TY: The overall concept was initiated by Jin of Hexfire and myself, to reawaken people's care about the long neglected homeless migrant workers in Sanhe, Shenzhen, a place close to Foxconn (yes, they are working in sweat factories to manufacture iPhones). NHK Japan interviewed those workers and released a shocking documentary go check it out.



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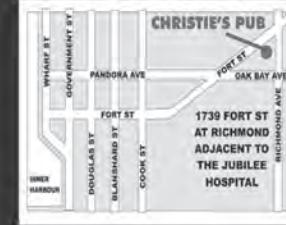
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HATRED REIGNS

Awaken the Ancients

Interview with Guitarist Jefferey Calder and Vocalist Mitchi Dimitriadis

Absolute Underground: For those unfamiliar with Hatred Reigns, what can you tell us about the band?

Hatred Reigns: Hatred Reigns hails from Ottawa, Ontario. The band was started in the summer of 2015, which was when the album concept was developed, and the songs were started to be written. There have been member changes over the years, unfortunately. Our current lineup is: Jeff Calder - guitars, Neil Grandy - drums, Adam Semler - bass and backing vocals, and Mitchi Dimitriadis - vocals, and he produced/engineered/mixed/mastered the recording.

AU: Hatred Reigns just unleashed its first full-length album, 'Awaken the Ancients'? What can you tell our readers about this album? How does this effort differ from your debut EP?

HR (JC): The album is an 8-song concept album divided between Realm I: Affliction, whereby the damned soul faces their struggles and embarks

on a journey across realms. Realm II: Affirmation has the damned soul realizing that their fate must trek across a treacherous void with many challenges to be faced on their way to Necropia where their final judgment will be determined.

AU: What is it about creating a conceptual album, and do you find that you are limited to writing around a concept both musically and lyrically?

HR (JC): Music-wise there are no boundaries or limitations. The project was always envisioned to blend old and new metal genres into our sound. We aren't reinventing the wheel nor professing to be the next new thing. Instead, we are fusing our favorite elements of our influences into one cohesive package in hopes of appealing to a broad range of fans. Like making delicious food, it never hurts to blend various tastes and textures

together to achieve an incredible result.

AU: How was it doing all recording in-house with your vocalist/producer Mitchi Dimitriadis?

HR (MD): We started out by demoing the songs and finding the proper tempo and grid information. Once the templates were complete, we presented them to the other members to sign off. We captured Jeff's guitars first and foremost as a skeleton, for everyone else to record to. All the album's tracks were captured in the rehearsal space over a year and a half period due to various delays. It was a pleasure seeing the vision come to fruition bit by bit.

Jeff and I created the orchestrations in the basement, whereby we blended some organic percussion sounds with live instruments and others we composed with programmed soundscapes to create the various parts that appear on the album.

Due to the departure of their old vocalist during

the time of recording process, when it came time for me to capture the lyrics, I learned the ex-vocalists' parts and phrasing and then added my own spin on some sections. It was different stepping into a band with 80% of the lyrics already written, but was fulfilling, nonetheless. I didn't expect to become permanent member, but one thing led to another and I'm glad to have stuck around.

We were also fortunate enough to get to mix and master the album via Darkmoon Productions Studios over in Gatineau, QC.

OTTAWA ONSLAUGHT

AU: It's Xmas time! Who in Death Metal do you think would be the best Santa?

HR (JC): Mike DiSalvo will always be the Wall of Reckoning to contend with. He always held the audience in the palm of his hand and felt like an impenetrable artist as he commanded his sheep to move and respond when he was the front-man of Cryptopsy. I could imagine him as the best Santa Claus. Though, Frank Mullen and his infamous chop would be amazing in command of a sleigh and the 9-killer reindeer!

AU: What do you think is the best death metal album to give for Xmas?

HR (JC): Of all the 2023 releases, Gorod / The Zenith Passage for Tech Death. I have to say Katholik's release is a top-tier Brutal Metal release for me. And the new Suffocation, Dying Fetus, and Cryptopsy as the Extreme Metal albums. I can't just pick one.

And if I wanted to gift the best death metal album of all time? For me that would be Suffocation's Pierced from Within, and Cryptopsy's Whisper Supremacy.

AU: Any touring plans for the band?

HR (MD): We have submitted for festivals out west and are keeping our options open for any show offers in Canada. If you'd like to see Hatred Reigns on your bill don't hesitate to message or approach the band.

AU: Is there anything else you would like to add for our readers?

HR (JC): Hatred Reigns "Awaken the Ancients" drops December 1, 2023. Support Canadian Metal!



and master the album via Darkmoon Productions Studios over in Gatineau, QC.



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EXSANG

Reactionary Dismemberment

Interview with
Bobby Cleveland
(bass, vocals), Matt
Danttouze (guitar),
and Lane Huculak
(drums)

By Tyler "The Dr"
McCaig

Exsang's Reactionary Dismemberment stands as a formidable testament to the enduring grindcore sound ingrained in Saskatoon's rich musical history. The band, composed of Bobby Cleveland, Matt Danttouze, and Lane Huculak, emerged during the pandemic with a shared aspiration—to craft the pinnacle of their musical careers.

This nine-track debut serves as an auditory onslaught, delivering fast, unrelenting, heart-pounding mayhem that encapsulates the raw energy of a live performance. The band dives deep into the realms of noisy, crusty hardcore punk. Their sound is marked by a cacophony of blast beats, d-beats, excessively distorted fuzzy bass, and filthy chainsaw riffs, all crowned by Cleveland's guttural vocals.

I sat down with the band on a cold October night in a cluttered garage.

AU: Can you tell us about the band's sound?

Bobby: Early on we discussed... what if we did Extreme Noise Terror mixed with Repulsion? Like those two sounds coming together was just something that would be really cool if it worked out.

AU: How would you describe the lyrical content of your music?

Bobby: Jello Biafra is one of my musical idols.



Something I really appreciate about his approach to lyrics, especially with the Dead Kennedys and stuff he did later, was he wasn't afraid to be funny. He made jokes about things; there was some satire, but there was a seriousness to it.

Lane: And often, our reaction to whatever right-wing podcast we've learned about that day. Bobby and I will kind of dispel about it. All of our roots are punk based as well.

AU: Are there any genres outside of metal or punk that have influenced your sound?

Lane: No, I don't have any other influences for this group. I want to do old, classic UK hardcore.

Matt: I'm on board with Lane. I just play brutal guitar riffs, that's all. That's it.

Bobby: In terms of other influences, the first song we wrote was "Festered Dread." I know a lot of people with Covid struggled with mental health and my anxiety went through the roof. That song...it was like what if I wrote a Slayer song about having anxiety and gave it a name.



AU: What is your view of success, in regards to Exsang?

Bobby: Honestly, I've hit it. I've started a band with friends, this is the band I've always wanted to be in. I'm 37 and this is the first album I've ever released with a band. This is success.

Lane: Being able to have even somewhat of an audience. Even if it's honestly just friends and it's playing for more than 10 people any night.

Matt: I agree with Bobby and Lane. I'm just really stoked to be playing this type of music.

Exsang's debut marks a significant chapter in Saskatoon's legendary grindcore scene, contributing to a tradition deeply rooted in noisy, aggressive, and authentic expressions of musical rebellion.



DOMESTIC SURVIVAL RESISTANCE





HUMAN MISSILE CRISIS

Liquor Store Stories

**Interview with Guitarist and Vocalist
D.J. Vaters**

Absolute Underground: Human Missile Crisis is based in Halifax, Nova Scotia, how's the music scene there these days?

HMC: Thriving. It reminds me of how the Sydney, Nova Scotia scene was back in the late 90's early 2000s. Full of creativity, packed shows, and new bands popping off all around. Particularly a big boom in the all-ages scene and I'm seeing a lot of new incredible young bands seemingly appear out of thin air. It's special right

Kamermans. It was mastered by Brad Boatright in Portland, Oregon at his mastering studio AUDIOSIEGE. The album is basically a journey through all of life's highs and lows, focusing on things like love, loss, jealousy, mortality, substance abuse, and just trying to exist in this anxiety-fueled world we live in.



AU: What inspired the album title?

HMC: The title track "Liquor Store Stories" refers to a time in my life over a decade ago. I was in a place where I wasn't happy. The relationship I was in, the job I had, the decisions I was making, it wasn't a good place. I was stuck in the endless feedback loop of a toxic relationship, and alcohol had a part in that. You know a toxic relationship, in whichever

now and I'm so happy to be around to witness it. Once upon a time back in the late 80's and early 90's, Halifax was called "The Seattle of Canada" and I feel like that's what it is again today.

AU: The band has a new album out, Liquor Store Stories. What can you tell our readers about this album?

HMC: Our debut album titled "Liquor Store Stories" was recorded live off the floor by Lil Thomas at The Sonic Temple in Halifax, Nova Scotia over two days back in June of 2022. We then went back and did some additional overdubs, vocals, and all the mixing with our friend Braden

variation it may appear, be is like an addiction. Thankfully I moved on from that place and we're both better now where we are. I look back on that time as my liquor store stories.

AU: We read that this album is for lost friends, "This album is dedicated in memory of our friends who are no longer with us." How was it writing, what I'm sure was an emotional experience to share with the world? What would you like listeners to know about your friends who have passed?

HMC: It was emotional at some points but more therapeutic in many other ways. I write a lot about personal things that are close to me and it's kind of my coping mechanism. It's like therapy for me. At one point I thought when writing the song Liquor Store Stories, it was going to be hard for me to perform live, but it never was. As for our friends who passed, they were incredible humans and they were all taken from us far too soon.

AU: How was it recording the album on limited time, "The album was mostly recorded over two days back-to-back. 10 hours a day, live off the floor." Did you find it put pressure on you to be more precise with timing and getting the right sound?

HMC: Going in we weren't too worried and were maybe even a little cocky about the whole thing. After the first day, we realized we had bit off a bit more than we could chew. My fingers hurt. We still got it done, but it was grueling. I would probably do it differently next time, but I wouldn't change how we did this album. I think part of the rawness that comes across on this record comes from the energy we had in that room on both of those days. There were still additional vocals and



guitar takes after the two live off-the-floor days, and that was done on a much more easy-going schedule but most of what is on the record is just those takes. No click, just us doing our thing.

AU: Is there anything else that you would like to add for our readers?

HMC: I just want to thank them for taking the time to check us out, thanks for taking the time to read this. I hope that you find something special in our music that maybe sticks with you. Maybe tell a friend? And if you're into physical media, we have some tapes, CDs, t-shirts, and prints for sale. We don't have the online shop up and running yet but we will come the new year. In the meantime, you can always DM me on Instagram or Facebook and I can get something mailed out. And for all the vinyl lovers out there, keep an eye out because we'll be putting the record out on 200 limited edition vinyl come early 2024.





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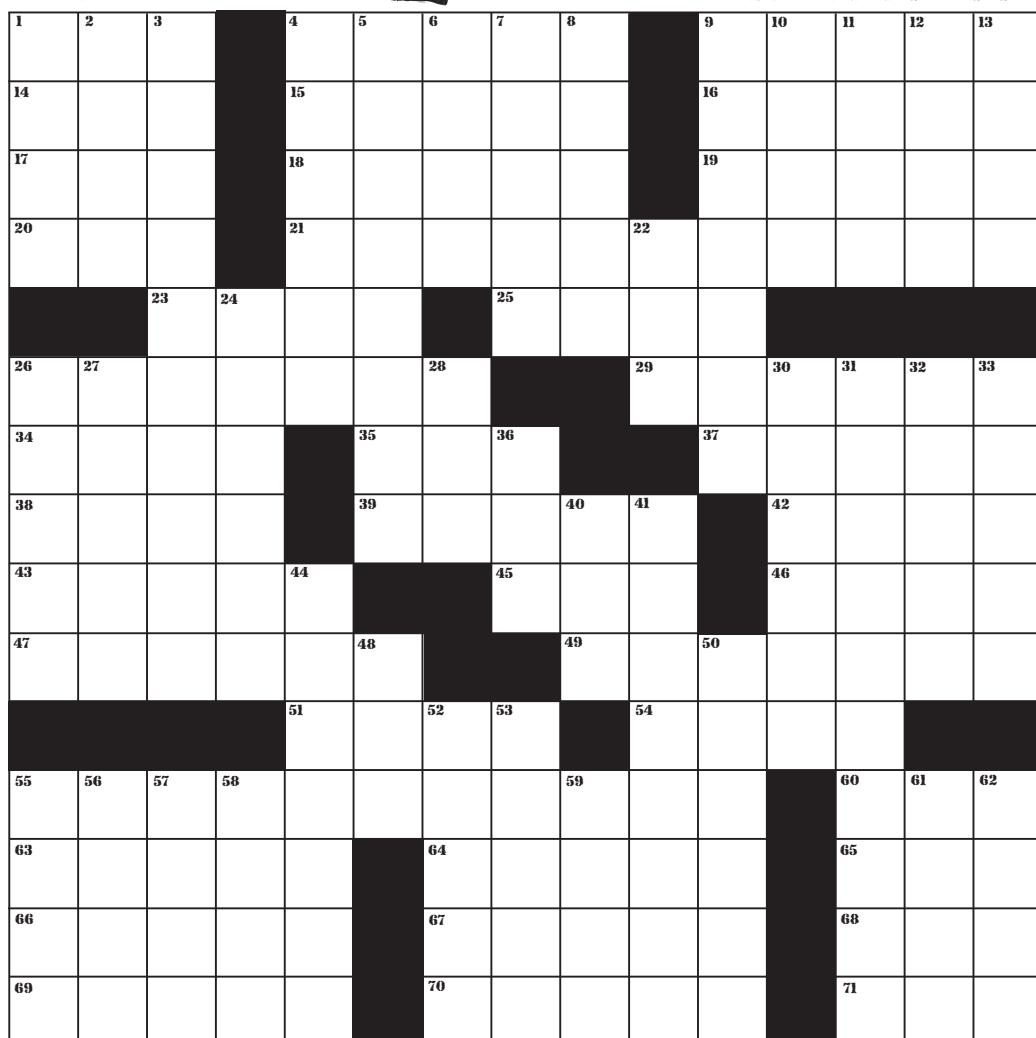
HURTS SO GOOD

ACROSS

1. *Dominates (slang)
4. Cutter, dory and junk
9. One may carry a big one
14. Where some ER patients go
15. Elvis's "I'll have _____ Christmas"
16. Incendiary T.O. Punk band
17. Catch in a film noir
18. Mick or Keith?
19. *Unseeded field
20. Gun moll's leg in a film noir
21. Cramps' salute to a dominatrix
23. Markers
25. *Canoeist, for one
26. Movie theme song "_____ Racer, Go!"
29. The Artful _____
34. _____ Against
35. *Word with job or storm
37. Member at a family reunion
38. Actress Lena
39. *Gardening tool
42. Jet that can go straight up
43. Summers of the X-Men
45. *Kid's boo-boo
46. Course for immigrants (var.)
47. BC island or Mexican state
49. Spend too much
51. Where to get gas in Canada
54. _____ little crow
55. Velvet Underground's salute to Baron von Sacher-Masoch
60. Negative vote
63. *Those with property
64. Boléro key
65. USSR spies
66. Maiden mascot
67. Trap (fr.)
68. "Evil Woman" band
69. *Looks for water
70. _____ clear
71. *Unhappy (slang)

DOWN

1. *In debt
2. Big league south of the border
3. Sex Pistols' salute to this puzzle's theme
4. Group that straddles the border of Spain and France



CROSSWORD NO. 99

DECEMBER, 2023

5. Slowest
6. Soothing ingredient in lotions
7. Musician's tool
8. *"Well, look here"
9. Spice from the crocus flower
10. You may set one or spring one
11. Actress Fisher
12. Bacteria E. _____
13. *Standard reference guide
22. Standard word guide
24. Willing to consider
26. Icky
27. Newfoundland's fossil fuel org.
28. Order at a 14-across, perhaps
30. Move away from
31. Pretenders' "Bad Boys _____"
32. Soft drink in GTA
33. Team track race
36. *Sounds of this puzzle
40. End a kids' song chorus
41. The power to influence
44. Strands
48. Faulkner novel "____ Lay Dying
50. Island known for its head stones
52. Goes crazy
53. "Get ____!" ("as if" in England)
55. *Pledged
56. *Finance
57. Beatty and Flanders
58. Brendon of Panic! At The Disco
59. Role for Peter Fonda
61. *Shining, in a poem
62. Black, in a poem

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FAIR HOURLY RATES QUICK TURN AROUND





ACE BREWING CO.

Interview with Head Brewmaster Dan Lake

By Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today?

Dan Lake: My name is Dan Lake, I'm Head Brewer/Brewmaster at Ace Brewing Co.

AU: How long have you been involved in the world of beer?

DL: I have been involved in the world of beer for probably about 15 years with 10 of it being working professionally in breweries.

AU: What was the genesis of Ace Brewing?

DL: Owners Kent & Jo-Anne Landolt opened Ace Brewing in the fall of 2019. Kent has been working in stainless steel manufacturing with a focus in

brewery equipment and wanted to apply his knowledge to opening his own brewery.

AU: What are some of the types of beer you brew?

DL: At Ace Brewing we pride ourselves in being able to execute any style and are continually introducing new seasonal beers. I would say our specialty is lager production and IPA's.

AU: What makes your beers unique in your opinion?

DL: It may sound cliché, but I would say our attention to detail is what sets us apart from other breweries. Our expectation for every batch of beer is for it to be "perfect" and we really dive into the details of water chemistry, yeast management, ingredient selection and brewhouse performance. We are constantly striving to improve our beers and are relentless in our pursuit of excellence.

AU: Have you won any awards over the years?

DL: We are very fortunate to have won several awards over the short time period that we have been open. We are a 4-time Canadian Brewing Award winner, a two-time Canada Beer Cup winner and a two-time BC Beer Award winner. These awards include the following:

Jet Fuel IPA is a two-time Canadian Brewing Award winner.

Droptank Blonde Ale has won a Canada Beer Cup medal and also a BC Beer Award.

Wingman Pale Ale has won a Canada Beer Cup medal.

Cold IPA has won a Canadian Brewing Award medal.

Chinook Rye Pale Ale has won a Canadian Brewing Award medal.

Golden Hour Czech Pale Lager has won a BC Beer Award.

AU: Any unique brewing secrets you can share?

DL: I wouldn't say that there is any "secret" to brewing great beer. The key is to not take any short cuts and really dive into the details. As I tell my team of brewers, the key to making great beer is making the right call on thousands of small decisions. Brewing is 90% science so the basis of most of your decisions should be factual. Making decent beer is actually quite easy, the difficult part is making excellent beer. Small changes to procedure, recipe development and quality control can make incremental improvements to your product.

When you add these up over time you start to see your beer quality going from good to great.

AU: Where are you located? Can people stop by to sample your beer?

DL: We are located in Courtenay, BC on Vancouver Island.

AU: Where can Ace Brewing currently be found on tap?

DL: Our products are currently only found on Vancouver Island but can be found from Victoria up to Campbell River.

AU: How was your experience at the Great Canadian Beer Festival in Victoria this summer?

DL: The GCBF is always such a great time. The fact

BREWING 101

that such a premiere beer festival is held in our own "backyard" is such a privilege. To be able to socialize with all our friends in the industry and also meet all our amazing customers and future customers is amazing.



AU: Any other special events you plan to attend on the horizon?

DL: Our front of house staff is doing an excellent job in planning events in our taproom. We constantly have things happening such as comedy, trivia, holiday events

and music.

AU: What's one thing you would still like to experiment with in the world of brewing?

DL: Right now, we are feeling energized and challenged by the science of lager brewing. The attention to details, time needed to brew these beers and satisfaction we feel from brewing them to our best ability is very rewarding.

AU: Anything else you would like people to know about Ace Brewing?

DL: I think a big thing about Ace is we are constantly evolving. We have our staple core beers that are always available and reliable but we also have a constantly evolving seasonal beers. We try to keep our eye on the trends of the industry and also experiment with new and interesting ideas all the time. Our taproom is a great place to enjoy a pint and our kitchen staff is immensely talented. We are currently in the middle of executing an expansion. This will mean more beer production, a bigger kitchen and food menu and also more space in our taproom.



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AUTOGRAMM

Music That Humans Can Play Interview with Jiffy Marx and C.C. Voltage

By Chuck Andrews

Absolute Underground: Who am I speaking with and what are your roles within Autogramm?

Jiffy Marx: I currently play synth and sing. I used to drink beer and margaritas but now I only drink margaritas.

C.C. Voltage: I'm on bass and background harmony creation duties.

AU: Where is Autogramm from exactly?

JM: We started out all living off the Commercial Drive in East Van but we've sorta spread out like spilled milch.

The Spitfires in Vancouver (and always there to help the Halos in a pinch). The Silo is/was in Black Mountain, Jerk With A Bomb, Destroyer, and Lightning Dust. Lars was in Bread & Butter and The Catheters.

AU: How many releases does Autogramm have?

JM: Three albums and two singles. There's a third single but I'm not sure what's happening with it. Oh and that's physical, we've got some digital only releases as well or at least one that I can think of..?

CCV: The new single will be out for our Euro tour in March.

AU: How would you describe the sound of your band for new listeners?

CCV: The bio says power pop / new wave. I think that works. We try to sound authentically like those things.

CCV: The idea was born in Berlin where we all crossed paths at one time or another. At the moment we live in Vancouver, Seattle and Chicago.

AU: What previous bands have you guys played in?

JM: Too many to name but currently play in another band called Night Court and my other band Jiffy Marker just makes recordings that we never release.

CCV: Many not worth mentioning but I've played with the Loyalties in London, Dysnea Boys in Berlin and

JM: No shirt, no shoes, no problem.

AU: Who are your biggest influences?

CCV: This is tough because we like pretty much everything under the sun. If it's a good tune it's a good tune. You can check out our playlists on Spotify and YouTube. For me The Professionals, Til Tuesday, Van Halen.

AU: Who are your most unlikely influences that we wouldn't guess?

JM: I'm not sure what constitutes "unlikely"- Psychedelic Furs, F.Y.P., Stompin' Tom? Those are three of my all time greats.

CCV: George Jones, Freddy Fender, the country music my dad used to sing to me as a kid.

AU: What are Autogramm's goals for 2024?

CCV: We have a European tour in March and a Midwest/East Coast US tour in summer with some time in Ontario and Quebec as well. The goal would be to have people at those shows!

AU: How did you guys come to be on Stomp Records?

CCV: I run a PR company called "No Rules PR" that works with Stomp frequently. We have a great relationship, and we have loads of common history in the underground music world. I think we're a bit of a weird band for them, but we're all skaters and punks from the old school, even if we don't exactly sound like it! We're very grateful they did the album for us.

AU: What's your latest or upcoming Stomp Records release? What can you tell us about it? Any songs you are extra stoked on?

CCV: The new album is called Music That Humans Can Play. It was written in our respective cities Chicago, Seattle and Vancouver and shared as digital demos long before we sat in the studio and actually recorded them. The songs developed the week before we hit the studio, and took on a life of their own. I like the ones I don't write! "Born Losers" and "Dive Right In" are probably my favorites.

STOMP RECORDS

AU: Who are your favourite Stomp Records bands?

JM: Real Sickies are great no matter what Billy Joe says.

CCV: Real Sickies and Wine Lips are my faves, but there are a lot of rad new bands they've signed recently.

AU: What instrument could you never live without?

JM: My bubblegum pink Mosrite has sentimental value but also is maybe one of a kind?

CCV: My SG. It's in Berlin, so I guess I can live without it, but it's my darling, and one day I will give it to my daughter.

AU: Any shows or plans for the holidays this year?

December 14 VANCOUVER BC - RED GATE

December 15 SEATTLE - BELLTOWN YACHT CLUB

December 16 PORTLAND - HIGH WATER MARK

AU: Best X-Mas present you ever got when you were a kid.

JM: Castle Greyskull.

CCV: Tie between Sex Pistols album at 13 or Millenium Falcon at 6.

AU: Worst Holiday experience you can remember?

JM: Last year was pretty sucktastic.

CCV: It wasn't bad really, but Christmas in Germany with the family all smoking at the table was weird.

AU: Do you prefer Santa Claus or Krampus?

CCV: My daughter just learned about Santa and she's pretty amped, so I am too.

AU: Is there anything else you would like to add?

CCV: See you in 2024!

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SMOKEMASTER Cosmic Connector

**Interview with bassist TobMaster
by Matt Norris**

AU: Who's in the band and what instruments do you play?

TobMaster: Smokemaster is a five piece band consisting of:

Lukas Bönschen - Drums

Tobias Tack - Organ, Synthesizer

Jerome "Jay" Holz - Lead Guitar

Björn Hofmann - Vocals, Rhythm Guitar

TobMaster - Bass

AU: Your music is layers of era defining awesomeness, the best of 60's psychedelic, 70's hard rock with undertones of what started heavy metal. A grandier journey into soundscapes and rhythmic grooves with excellent musicianship reminiscent of Pink Floyd mixed with a vocalist who has many colours but at times can sound like Jim Morrison. What else can I say?

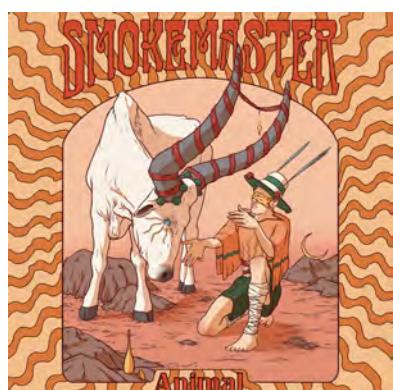
TobMaster:

WOW! I think your explanation is 100% on point. This is exactly what we want our soundscapes to feel for the audience.

I guess the only thing I would add is that we try to combine different musical styles such as blues, hard rock, kraut rock while listening to our LPs.

AU: In my mind and a lot of others your band's style is what is missing from today's pop music culture but also sounds right at home and reigned for a new era being 2023. Where did the band begin and where do you wish to see it going in years to come?

TobMaster: Well, Lukas and I played in a hard rock band called Cunning Mantrap. Our guitarist used to write all the songs and started to program all



TobMaster: The bands would be: The Jimi Hendrix Experience, The Doors, and Colour Haze.

This would be a real blast for everyone in the audience.

AU: Any place on Earth, your choice, to make a music video, where would it be?

TobMaster: That's hard to tell, we live on such a beautiful planet with so many different biospheres. It would depend on the song this video should be for and the sounds, but generally it could be made everywhere.

AU: If you weren't brilliant musicians on a trajectory course to world stardom what would you be doing?

TobMaster: (laughs) I guess I would be a supervisor in a company for chemical products as I completed an apprenticeship as a operator for chemical products and got a master degree in business management on top.

AU: What is the perfect night out after playing an energetic concert? Do you guys party all night or sip organic tea?

TobMaster: Both things might happen. It depends on things like if we have to play the next day, how long the ride will be and so on. I

mean people are paying to see us live, it would be disrespectful if we couldn't show 100% just because we partied yesterday. But if we have time to party, I can tell ya we got a lot of stamina for that.

AU: If I happened to eat a lot of psychedelic magic mushrooms and hallucinated while listening to your music, what visions do you think I would see?

TobMaster: I guess you would be able to see beyond time and space and if you would be able to write it down, you would become a nobel prize winner for astrophysics.

AU: For first time listeners to Smokemaster name 3 songs people should check out to get a feel for the band and where do we find them?

TobMaster: I would advise to listen to these 3 songs: Cosmic Connector, Astronaut Of Love, Astral Traveller.

AU: Any bands from your town that you are friends with you'd like to give a shout-out to or whom we should check out.

TobMaster: Oh yeah, definitely. There are: Der Neue Planet, Purple Dawn, Astral Kompakt, The Dog Hunters, Gong Wah, Noorvik and many more. You should also listen to the bands from the label Tonzenen Records.

AU: Any words of worldly wisdom you'd like to share with us (some of us need it)?

TobMaster: Just treat people like you want them to treat you and everything is fine.

AU: If your band was shipwrecked on a deserted island and could only listen to one album for eternity what album would you all agree on? and no it can't be your own album.

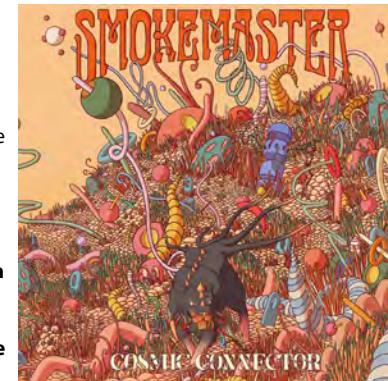
TobMaster: UUUUHHHHH That's a hard one... MMmmhhh I guess it would be Masters Of Reality from Black Sabbath.

AU: Your music is beautifully epic, creative, brilliant and era defining and refining, damn right inspirational. Anything you'd like to add to that?

TobMaster: Words like these are an honor to us, thank you! The focus to us is, that our music takes you into worlds you like to be when no fucker wants you to work for, I'd say.

AU: If music is the blood and the concert is the bones, what is the brain and what is the body?

TobMaster: I think the brain is creativity itself,



as it is still a myth to all of us and has the power to create wonderful and unknown things. The body from my point of view is the audience which transfers this creativity into the physical world by dancing and having a very good time.

AU: What does the name Smokemaster mean to you?

TobMaster: It's typical for bands in our genre to choose a name which shows an intimidation to marijuana. My Nickname is TobMaster, so Lukas came up with this name.

AU: Thank you for the dedication to your art, tell us a bit about your new album.

TobMaster: With COSMIC CONNECTOR we wanted to show that we can do more than just jam around one or two chords for about 10 minutes.

We decided to give our songs more structure as Björn was part of the band from the beginning of the writing process.

On our first album SMOKEMASTER we didn't have a singer until we recorded everything.

So on COSMIC CONNECTOR we were able to write more filigree songs, we were able to find a more precise musical language, you know?

AU: Any shameless self promotion you'd like to share regarding your music catalogue or upcoming tours or merchandise we can buy as well as any links.

TobMaster: Just listen to our music and spread the word if you like it! It's the best way to promote a band, play it at every birthday party, and show it to all your friends and family until they know the band name Smokemaster.

And if you see a way to bring us to Canada, contact us.

AU: From all of us we hope for your greatness and fame, you deserve it. Hard work pays off and after listening to your live concerts the hard work has obviously begun a long time ago and is already paying off in quality and song writing abilities. Peace and good luck to you and your families.

TobMaster: Thank you for having us.

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Cannabis Consumption Space

Nestled in the heart of Cumberland, BC, Trugreen Cannabis is pioneering a project that promises to transform the landscape of cannabis consumption spaces. Under the visionary leadership of Michael Arneja, President of Trugreen Cannabis, this endeavor is set to establish one of British Columbia's first outdoor cannabis consumption lounges. By using a phased approach to cannabis consumption, aiming to create a legal, responsible, and welcoming environment for all enthusiasts.

Guiding this unique endeavor alongside Arneja is Max Oudendag, instrumental in curating a space that seamlessly combines family-friendly community activities with responsible cannabis consumption. Their mission is clear: prioritize being kid and family-friendly while establishing a legal and community-accepted cannabis consumption area.

"We're excited to be in a position to explore



how to break down the stigma of cannabis consumption and find a way to integrate that into a healthy community gathering space," Oudendag emphasizes.

This ambitious project first took root with a series of pop-up spaces adjacent to Trugreen Cannabis, serving as a summer pilot project. "We've been operating these pop-ups to see what the space could look like, and to get feedback from the community on what they want it to look like," he adds, highlighting the project's community-driven nature.

The goal was to gather insights and pave the way for a more permanent and official community space, slated to be unveiled by the end of 2024 under the moniker "CUB," short for the Community Urban Bazaar. Arneja's vision extends beyond the mere creation of a cannabis consumption area; it seeks to nurture "a stigma-free space where the community can gather and celebrate the cannabis culture with a responsible blend of cannabis use and community building."

The space, occupying an adjoining lot next to Trugreen, was initially conceived as an "incubator" for local entrepreneurs. However, the overwhelming interest from existing businesses in the area has led to the expectation that CUB will soon house a bakery, coffee shop, fish and chips establishment, and serve as a venue for



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Skater : Joshua Strain Photo : Shayne Ehman

community activities like yoga, and live music.

Their dedication has not gone unnoticed. The project is on a "short list" to become one of the first legal consumption spaces in British Columbia. Earlier this year, British Columbia released a "What We Heard" report, soliciting input on the nature of cannabis consumption spaces in the province. This feedback will significantly influence provincial decisions regarding the allowance and regulation of such spaces.

British Columbia's stance on indoor smoking and vaping restrictions has made outdoor consumption spaces like the one in Cumberland an attractive option. Arneja recognizes that the ability to promote and formally consume cannabis in an outdoor setting is vital for the success of their venture.

"We still have a lot of work to do, but we hope to be the first, if not one of the first, community consumption spaces of its kind in British Columbia."

The Phased Approach in a Nutshell

The phased approach is a strategic road-map designed to ensure the smooth and responsible development of the cannabis consumption space at CUB. It involves several key elements that are vital to the success of this transformative initiative.

1. Start Low and Go Slow

One of the cornerstones of the phased approach is a commitment to responsible consumption. This means beginning with limited hours of operation and establishing per-customer consumption limits. By taking this measured approach, CUB ensures that patrons have a controlled and enjoyable experience while minimizing potential risks.

2. Single-Use Purchases and Cannabis Concierge Experiences

In the initial phases, CUB will restrict purchases to single-use products with packaging, labeling, and warning requirements. This measure not only promotes safety but also encourages patrons to explore a variety of regulated cannabis products. Additionally, the introduction of knowledgeable cannabis concierges enhances the class of cannabis entertainment. Instead of furtively consuming cannabis, patrons will have the opportunity to engage with a concierge who can curate their experiences based on their needs and tolerances.

3. Collaboration with Indigenous Communities

CUB places a strong emphasis on collaborating with Indigenous communities. Chief Nicole Rempel of the Komoks First Nation, among others, has been actively engaged, providing feedback and blessings to ensure that the project respects and aligns with Indigenous perspectives.

4. Economic Impact and Business Viability

The phased approach is not just about responsible consumption; it's also about economic growth. CUB's plan aligns with the official community plan to guide future growth and contribute positively to the local economy. It aims to provide a substantial provincial referral, ensuring that cannabis consumption is conducted professionally and benefits the community.

5. Collaborative Partnerships and Safety Measures

Collaborative partnerships, such as ride-sharing services, will play a crucial role in discouraging drug-affected driving. Agreement from consumers to refrain from driving as a condition

COMMUNITY URBAN BAZAAR

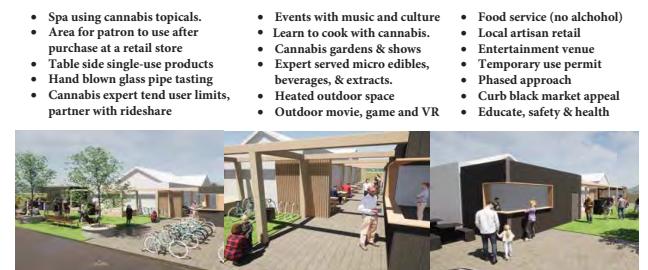
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Phased temporary use permit to allow outdoor cannabis consumption areas to help alleviate lack of access to a permissible place to consume cannabis



Events with music and culture • Food service (no alcohol)

Area for patron to use after purchase at a retail store • Local artisan retail

Table side single-use products • Entertainment venue

Hand blown glass pipe tasting • Temporary use permit

Cannabis expert tend user limits, partner with rideshare • Phased approach

Heated outdoor space • Curb black market appeal

Outdoor movie, game and VR • Educate, safety & health

of sale, along with responsible beverage service training, are among the measures CUB will implement to enhance safety.

6. Embracing Diversity, Equality, and Access

Inclusivity is at the heart of the phased approach. CUB aims to create a space where everyone, regardless of background, can enjoy cannabis without fear or stigma. This commitment extends to offering diverse experiences, from yoga sessions with cannabis oils to live music performances. In essence, the phased approach is about responsible growth. It acknowledges the importance of starting with a strong foundation of safety, education, and inclusivity. By taking these deliberate steps, CUB aims to create a cannabis consumption space that not only sets the standard for responsible cannabis use but also fosters a sense of community and belonging for all enthusiasts.

For inquiries and further information, please contact Michael Arneja at mike.arneja@trugreens.ca. or 250-400-0420, and @cub.space on Instagram.

BRENDAN + CHERYL

brendanandcheryl.bandcamp.com

CANNABIS CORNER



WESTBLVD CANNABIS

CRO Daryn Medwid

Interview By Iree-I

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are your skills to pay the bills?

DM: Daryn Medwid, Chief Revenue Officer at WestBLVD Cannabis, home of Choklit Park, Gladstone and Farm & Florist. I'm the guy that's supposed to ensure that we sell enough weed to feed all of our families

AU: When did you first start growing Cannabis?

DM: WestBLVD is a processor and not a cultivator, so we don't grow anything on site. I've been growing for personal use for years and only wish that my performance could come close to the quality of the best growers that I know. A guy can dream, though...

AU: What first drew you to the Cannabis industry?

DM: I've been smoking since I was a teenager but had no desire to jump into the industry when it was legalized because I was being approached by the kinds of groups that gave me no desire to jump in; the group with face tattoos and hockey bags full of money, or the group that used to sell Campbell's Soup and had a bank vault full of money but had no idea what cannabis was. Finally, a buddy who was running a publicly traded cannabis shop called me in to help him fix the business and the rest is history.

AU: What strains do you currently produce and what makes them unique?

DM: Since we aren't cultivators, we have partnerships with craft growers who develop unique cultivars for us. A few of them have been pheno-hunted but most come from cuts that have been imported in various ways. Our Choklit Park line strives to find original strains with west coast origins clocking in at a minimum of 27% THC.

AU: Do you prefer Sativas or Indicas?

DM: Honestly, I'm one of those people that can't really tell the difference between the two highs. I lean into choosing Indica simply because I won't smoke when I need to take care of business so it's mostly a nighttime experience for me.

AU: What is your favorite all-time strain to smoke?

DM: My all-time favorite strain is Lavender Jones, but we also have a Black Garlic that I can't seem to get off the turntable. I've also been playing with culinary products from our Farm & Florist line by

using Infused Chili Garlic oil on pizza and Infused Tamari Soy Sauce on just about everything else.

AU: What is it like being a Licensed Producer in BC?

DM: There are not enough words to describe the emotional roller-coaster ride of legalized cannabis. Each day is an eclectic mix of horror and wonder, but I love it. Everybody is a start-up business in a start-up industry and there are no well-worn ruts to get stuck in. If you have an entrepreneurial mindset, it's a wonderland of opportunity but with a really great chance that you won't survive long term. Masochists only need apply.

AU: Why is it important to support local growers?

DM: Honestly, I think it's important to support all craft growers anywhere in Canada. Most of them don't have the resources to do anything other than grow and sell B2B but, without them, we'd only have access to mass-produced corporate weed that's been stored in a vault for two years and passed off as fresh.

AU: What makes an expert grower in your opinion?

DM: I think it's a magical combination of listening to the plant, rigor around scheduling, being a clean freak, and a bit of being a mad scientist. I don't think years of experience matter if they don't adhere to the basics. My Head Grower at Citizen Stash was 24 years old, and he was sought out by growers many times older than him for advice.



**WEST BLVD
CANNABIS CO.**

AU: What are some growing secrets or tips you can share with our readers?

DM: I'm the wrong guy to ask as I only grow for personal use, if I could grow anything as good as the weed we sell then I'd be a very happy guy.

AU: What are your sub brands, and what is the difference between them?

DM: Choklit Park is our line of original craft strains that register above 27% THC with west coast origins.

Gladstone is our outdoor line and done in partnership with Canada's largest outdoor cultivator with potencies between 22 and 25%. Farm & Florist is our super premium culinary line of infused cooking oils and sauces.

AU: Where are your products available?

DM: From British Columbia to Ontario and even in the Yukon. We're proud to partner with retailers who 'get it' in each province but, being a BC company, we have a special affinity for the kids over at Evergreen Cannabis in Kitsilano, BC's first legal cannabis retailer, (ecsvan.ca) who have supported us from day one. You can order online, and Evergreen will deliver anywhere in BC!

AU: Any herbal inspired plans for the holidaze this year?

DM: Farm & Florist produced Mistlestoned which is a stocking stuffer that contains two infused flavored coffee creamers: mocha and hazelnut, which are killer. I plan on consuming many of these over the holiday season.

westblvdcannabis.com
choklitparkcannabis.com
letsgetgladstoned.com
farmandflorist.com





POWDER SEEKERS

got there on the train. Jai said he had access to a 4x4 Mercedes camper van and would bring it for killer transport from country to country. By this time I had started hearing replies back from the resorts I emailed asking for media ski passes. And holy shit they were

booze too. He pointed out some other French riff-raff who got caught with too much booze and said for us to stay here and drink until we had no more booze. Hmmm I was taken aback by this strange cop behaviour. Back home the cop would have poured it out and issued fines and been a dick because I lied but not in a polite society like France. Mission accomplished, booze drank, and off we go. The cop sees us, checks my bag again, and asks how it was? I replied "It was French so it was great", he let us go. I walked 10 feet in there and bought a bottle of French champagne for 10 euros and continued on with the best party ever! We got lost on the Paris subway and it stopped because people were on the tracks so we got to snoop around drunk in the subway tunnels. Tourists never get to do that. By 4 am we were staggering around the Eiffel Tower and noticed millions of rats snarfing spilled popcorn and feeding on anything they could get. A flash mob of Algerians rolled up in fast and furious cars



and pumped the tunes and had a crazy dance off. All in all an epic night.

Back to the hotel for two hours sleep before getting on a train at 7am out to our first Alps mountain destination. Val Thorens is the biggest of the three ski resorts in Les 3 Vallées (The Three Valleys). As the train pulled out of the station we



had no idea another train would not leave Paris for a week due to the Charlie Hebdo massacre and terror killings that ripped Paris apart that morning, and for the next several months. Paris is still not the same.

Next issue... Ripping the Alps part deux (That's French for Two)



POWDER SEEKERS



POWDER SEEKERS

Interview with Master Terrain Park Builder, Charles Beckinsale – Part 5

By Ira "Big Air" Hunter

Absolute Underground: What country has the best ski culture or après scene?

CB: I think either Austria or France. I was on DC for a long time and we'd always go to Méribel in France for the annual team piss up. There was Devun (Walsh), Ako, Ryan Tiene, me, and Anto (Chamberland) and all those guys we'd all end up in Méribel. They had this bar called the La Folie Douce. It was just wild. It's like when you walk into a nightclub late and you've got to get from zero to hero quickly. The music's pumping, they're spraying everyone with champagne, the vibe is just crazy. When you get there you just want to drink as much as you can as quick as you can to get on their level but then everyone ends up hammered at about 4:30 or five o'clock and then has to snowboard down the mountain. Just wrecked. Then the next bar at the base of the hill is waiting for you. With its music pumping and everyone's like, let's get one more. So you kind of just end up getting suckered into the après no matter what if you start at this on hill bar. That was probably the most fun I've had at après in my life.

AU: What make the European après-ski scene better?

CB: Europe just seems to have a better vibe. I'm really not a fan of the Australian/North American kind of après scene. I think it sucks because you go snowboard, you get off the hill, you go have dinner, you wait

out instead of a night out. So I think I think North America does it wrong and I think Europe does it right.

AU: Yeah, we went to a few Schnapps bars in Austria and they were lighting the table on fire and it was fucking awesome.

CB: I feel like you can have both in Europe. You can snowboard every day and party a bit. Whereas in Canada or North America in general or in Australia if you want to be a party guy, you can't do both. Or if you're going to party, you know nothing good is happening the next day. Because you're going to be out until three or four. So it's just a different kind of scene in Europe. I feel like the balance is right there. There are people that go to Whistler for the season and end up just hanging out in the bars with like drug and alcohol problems. I think that's kind of a sad scenario in my mind. I had a few friends that got swallowed by the night scene there. It wasn't that cool.

AU: Why does every Australian in the world end up at Whistler?

CB: A lot of Australians like to travel but unfortunately we like going to similar places. I think one of the reasons is because Whistler needs a lot of international staff to run the lifts and do all the shitty jobs. Australians fresh out of school want to go party and snowboard, I think, and it seems like a great experience. So they probably go there to do those jobs that most Canadians might not want to do. We just like traveling and having a good time. Unfortunately there's a big element of like shitty Australian's that are there. Just

around and everyone goes out partying after that. Whereas in Europe, it's like you basically have a few drinks on the hill, have a few more and if you are into going out and partying you pretty much hammer it before dinner. Have dinner and then if you really want to turn up you go out again. But most of time you kind of go to bed after dinner and wake up reasonably fresh for the next day after having an afternoon

young, kind of disrespectful and give all of us a bad name and a bit of a generalization. I have Canadian friends that we ended up being friends but at first wouldn't really give me the time of day because I was Australian, wouldn't take me seriously. Which kind of bothered me because I'd done so much in my life already at that time and to be judged like that just because you are a certain nationality and there is a bad stereotype there. I never participated in that side of things. The biggest moment of shame for me was Australia day. Walking past the Longhorn and just thinking those are your people. It doesn't represent all of us. Definitely not.

AU: What are some of your crowning achievements in your snowboard park building career?

CB: I don't like doing events as much as I like doing photo shoots and things. So that is kind of more where I put my energy. I built the jump that Max (Parrot) did his first quad cork on for Monster up at Blackcomb. I did a lot of stuff on Blackcomb, a lot of ski movie stuff. I built a huge WhaleTail for Level 1. It's more Feature driven as far as things that I am proudest of.

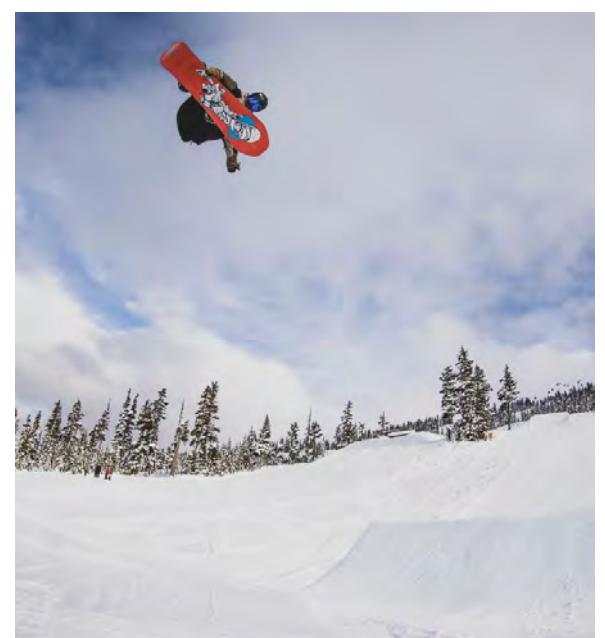
AU: So it's more like if your jump makes it into a video or on a cover you know that's your jump.

CB: Yeah totally. I would kind of spend the spring time up above on Blackcomb just building photo-shoot features. Which is the most enjoyable part of it for me. But I'd say the biggest achievements for me would be starting Stomping Grounds

and running that each year. Probably my most proud moment locally in Australia would be bringing a good crew together and making Perisher kind of like the epicenter of the snowboard scene for the southern hemisphere winters.

AU: Are there certain snowboarders you work with a lot?

CB: We'll do all the projects for Mark McMorris whether it's his photo-shoots or jumps for him to train on. I'm kind of Mark's private builder. I work pretty closely with him. Actually that might be the highlight of my career just being able to work with Mark regularly and build his ideas. I also work with the Canadian Olympic team as their main builder. So I'll travel and build stuff for them all over the world.



AU: Is there anything else coming up that you're working on?

CB: We will do the Stomping Grounds camps again in Saas-Fee. I think for me that's the biggest highlight because it's my own company. Also just the amount of new tricks that get landed there every year and having all the best people in one spot. I think that for me is my biggest achievement.

AU: It sounds like with all your travelling and the people you've met that that's the real reward. It wasn't winning a gold medal. It's the experience of being around some of these amazing riders.

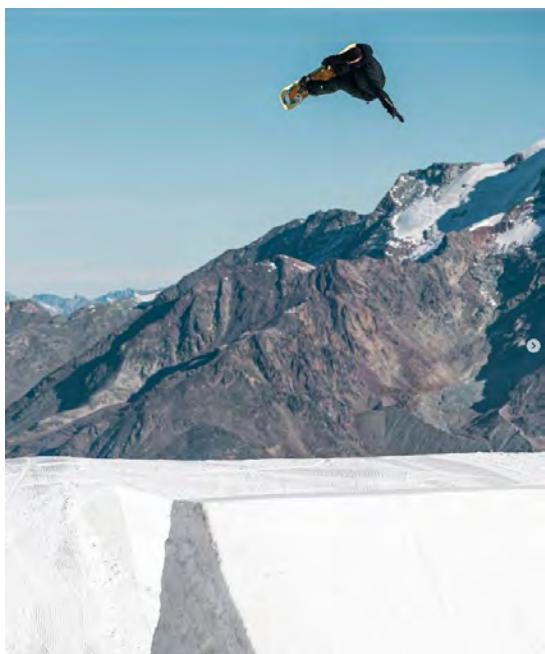
CB: Yeah, I think just relationships over the years and the different people you get to hang out with and all the different walks of life. There is just a lot to learn from everyone else and their experiences. I find that's been the greatest gift is to just get out of your bubble in your comfort zone and learn from other people. I think that's the greatest gift you can get in life.

AU: Any final words of wisdom for Canadian snowboarders?

CB: Stay passionate and if you want something get after it. Don't take no for an answer. It really doesn't

matter where you come from. It matters more about where you want to take it and what you want to do.

stompinggroundsprojects.com
[@thestompinggroundspark](http://thestompinggroundspark)



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DARKSIDE RELEASING

TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE: HIGH OCTANE HORROR!

By Vince D'Amato

This Christmas season, Darkside Releasing will be shipping out the a Blu-ray release (first-time-on the format) Reveries of Solitary Stroller, a fanciful and dark Italian film, a mix of stop-motion animation and live-action, which came to us via the American distribution company High Octane during our hefty multi-Blu-ray fall release (coordinated between High Octane and Darkside Releasing), which saw 13 new horror and weird-ass Blu-rays and Special Editions put up for purchase this past Shocktober, which also included an exclusive release of the gory feminist horror flick Marla and the Euro horror-comedy It Hatched, the indie trucker/open-road-horror movie 6 Wheels from Hell and the bizarre Green Woman from Australia. Jumping ahead to December, Reveries of Solitary Stroller showcases the last of the late-2023 physical media releases between Darkside and High Octane; however, we had become familiar with the Italian dark fantasy film a few years ago, through our (now-defunct) non-profit genre film festival Cinemafantastique,



There were several inspired films that had come through Cinemafantastique that we would have loved to have been able to put out on Darkside Releasing (we did manage that for a few titles, such as Picture of Beauty and Poltergeist), and Reveries of Solitary Stroller was certainly in our "which list" but ended up getting away. As serendipity would have it, Reveries (like Marla, which had also gotten away), has now made a second appearance for us, with a chance for Darkside Releasing to get involved and to help represent it to genre audiences who are fans of the wonderful world of physical media.



which used to screen genre films annually in Vancouver, BC from 2015 to 2020 (the last event taking place mid-lockdown). As the pandemic waned after 2020, Cinemafantastique did too, as it was becoming simply too much to be coordinating an annual three-day film festival along with running an independent distribution company – something had to give, and unfortunately, it had to be the film festival.



darksidereleasing.com
Further reading on Cinemafantastique can be found here: <https://cinemafantastique.org/>



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KENNY VS. SPENNY 20 Year Anniversary Comedy Tour

Interview with Spencer Rice

By Ira Hunter and Raymond MacKay

AU: Who are we talking to and what are your skills to pay the bills?

Spencer Rice: I'm Spenny, and I have no skills. That's why I'm in show business.

AU: For our readers who might be unfamiliar with your show Kenny vs. Spenny, please tell us about it?

SR: We're two idiots who compete against each other in comedic competitions.

AU: What was the origin of Kenny vs. Spenny? Was there any kind of inspiration to the idea at the time?

SR: We had a television development deal with Will Smith's production company, and KVS was one of four shows we created for them.

AU: Have you ever thought about crossing over and competing against other similar celebrities like Tom Green or the guys from Jackass?

SR: Yes. We wanted to do a celebrity version, but nobody seemed interested.

AU: Have any of the competitions or humiliations been too extreme for TV?

SR: Yes. Matt Parker and Trey Stone (South Park) produced season four and they wanted us to put our penises in each other's mouths. The network said no but we softened the concept to what became "Who Can 69 the Longest."

AU: What can you tell us about this most recent tour you're currently on? What can people expect to see and experience?

SR: This is our 20th Anniversary Tour, where we show never aired clips, and do our toxic comedy stand-up.

AU: As Easterners what do you like best about touring the West Coast of Canada?

SR: The sushi. But both coasts of Canada are fantastic.

AU: What is the absolute weirdest competition you've done on Kenny vs Spenny?

SR: Who can keep a poop in our diapers the longest.

AU: What would you do to Kenny if it was like the Purge movies and you could get away with anything?

SR: Anything short of killing him, as I still need him to make money.

AU: Did Al Pacino ever read your script when you gave it to him at the climactic moment of your first documentary, "Pitch"? Is he aware he was part of the hero moment of your movie?

SR: I don't know, but generally stars read scripts from their agents, not random people in a media scrum.

AU: Take us to normal day in the life of Spenny without Kenny around?

SR: Family, playing music, comedy and television. All of those make me happy.

AU: Take us to normal day in the life of Spenny with Kenny around?

SR: At this point in our career, we enjoy each other when we're together on the road.

AU: Why do you think Kenny is so evil? Maybe he needs an exorcist.

SR: I've known him all my life. It's not that he's evil as much as can't handle losing or looking bad. Luckily, I don't give a crap.

AU: What was the worst humiliation Kenny has chosen for you?

SR: Season One, before I was used to being on TV, he had a transvestite whip me. I was tied up like Jesus on the cross in my underwear, and Kenny was trying to pull my underwear down, and I freaked out and broke the guy's cross.

AU: What was the worst humiliation you have chosen for Kenny?

SR: Making him French kiss an eighty year old woman. I still get goosebumps thinking about it.

AU: What's been the most painful stunt/humiliation you've done?

SR: When we were strapped in the 69 position and the crew had a firetruck blast a hose on us.

AU: When you take your show on the road are there competitions and humiliations every night? If so, are they the same every night or do they vary city to city?

SR: We don't compete live. It would be lame without the bells and whistles of the TV show.

AU: How do you stay friends with someone so vile and hairy? Or is it all an act? Like are you guys best friends at the end of the day, kind of like the world of professional wrestling?

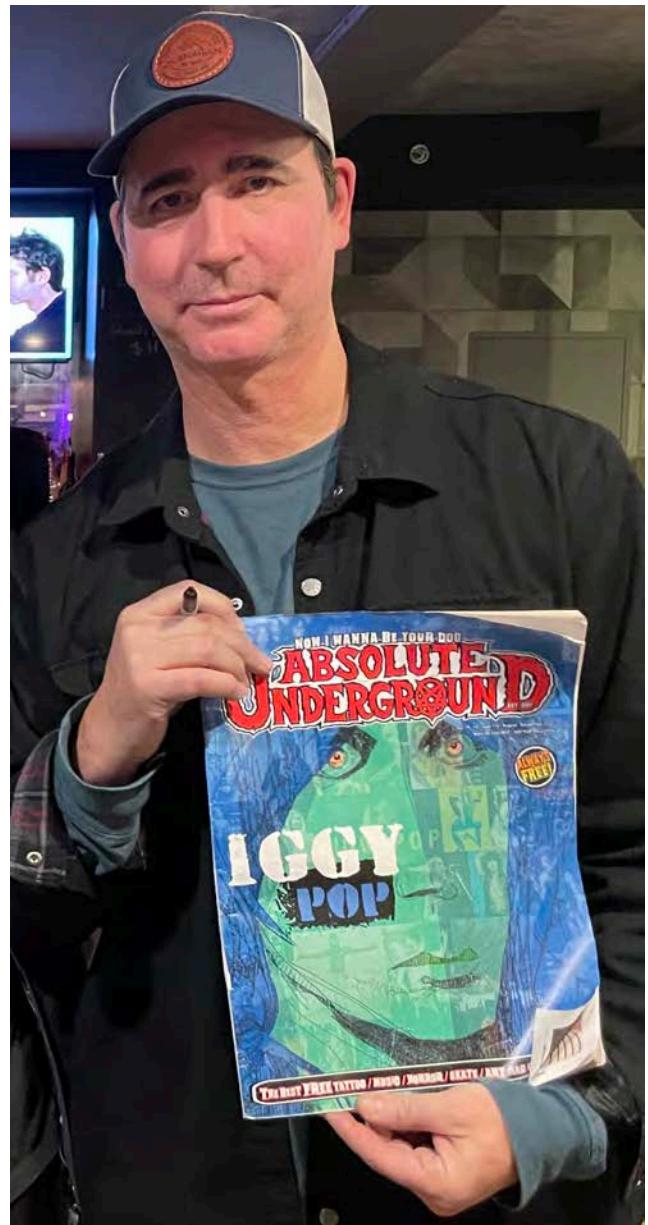
SR: We have historically had a volatile friendship, but these days the pressure isn't nearly as bad and we enjoy touring. It's very easy for Kenny to push my buttons on stage and I can revert back to old hostility.

AU: Advice for the children out there, thinking of doing stupid things on the Internet for fame and fortune?

SR: I never thought of us as doing "stupid things" because it was part of a competition and served the story. We're not like Jackass. My advice, at least make money.

AU: Where is the future of entertainment headed in your opinion?

SR: Streaming. The woke comedy killers will not last forever.

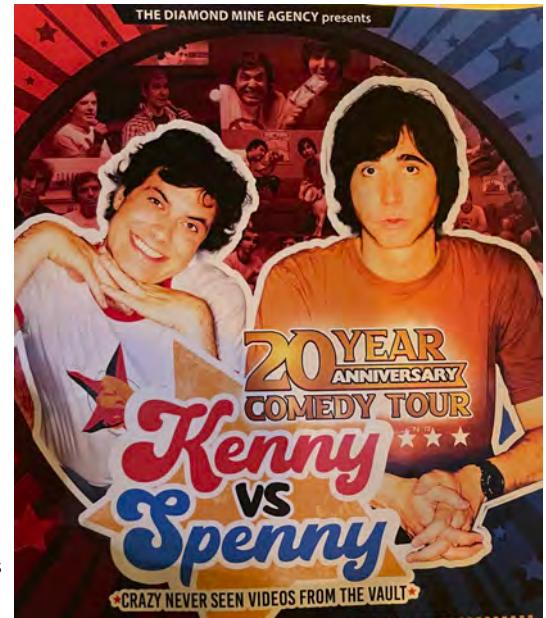


AU: How is your love life these days? Are there lots of Spenny groupies out there or does Kenny always cock block you?

SR: We're both happily married. I don't miss chasing women. I think that comes with age usually.

AU: Final words of wisdom for our discerning readers?

SR: Don't get caught up in the online hate-fests. They're manipulative and will make you unhappy.



AU: How do people find you online?

SR: Spenny on X
Spencer Spenny Rice on Facebook.
Spencer Spenny Rice on IG



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As we've been driving back and forth across Canada for more than three decades, we've come up with some guidelines that help us on the road. Figured we'd share.

They're tips, not rules. Everyone has their own way of touring, but some of these may help younger bands on their way.



PART FIVE

TOUR TIP NUMBER 25



PLAY THE PUNK HOUSE

It's crazy hot. It's absurdly crowded. It's ridiculously fun.

TOUR TIP NUMBER 26



TOUR ISN'T WORK IT'S A VACATION

You're visiting places you've never seen, making new friends, discovering new bands and there's a party every night. JUST RELAX AND ENJOY IT.

TOUR TIP NUMBER 27



MAKE A DISTINCT TOUR POSTER

Whether online or on a pole, it's the best way of getting new (and old) eyes on your show.

TOUR TIP NUMBER 28



EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO THROW (NON-LETHAL) OBJECTS AT SNORERS

TOUR TIP NUMBER 29



ALWAYS TIP THE BAR STAFF WELL.

...even if you're getting free drinks. Most staff rely on tips to survive.

TOUR TIP NUMBER 30



BE PREPARED TO DO A LITTLE EXTRA

Punk's a cooperative thing. Sometimes you share gear, sometimes you sweep up.

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Merry Christmas!

NO WAVES

Band Interview by Chuck Andrews

Absolute Underground: Who am I speaking to and what do you do in No Waves?

No Waves: Angel and Sam, we play guitar, drums, and sing.

AU: What first got you into the idea of starting a band?

NW: We wanted to start one since we were like 14. That was around the time we met, and we were pretty much the only two people into music.

AU: Where are No Waves from and what is the music scene like there?

NW: We're all born in other countries but were based in Montreal, Canada.

The scene here is super diverse; it's like an ecosystem but pretty close knit, and really warm once you get to know it.

AU: How would you describe your band?

NW: I (Sam) always say it's pop, even if it comes off aggressive or raw, it's always made to be for everyone.

AU: Did No Waves form during the pandemic lockdowns a couple of years ago?

NW: No, we started in 2017, so when we were in high school.

AU: Can you describe what it was like to be a band during those socially strange times?

NW: We had already started a few years before the pandemic hit, so it was really just weird trying to find ways to practice and hang out. It kind of fucked up our flow, but we still kept going pretty consistently even if we weren't doing shows.

AU: How many full lengths and EPs have you released?

NW: We have two EPs as of right now.

AU: Who are your biggest influences?

NW: Skrillex, Crabe, N8Noface, Natanael Cano, and Ween.

AU: How did you guys come to be on Stomp Records?

NW: They found us after a show and hit us up. We had this EP that we wanted to put out anyway, and

STOMP RECORDS

they wanted to help.

AU: Any shows or plans for the holidays this year?

NW: Our launch party for the EP is going to be December 16th. It's going to be awesome, and we're really looking forward to it.

AU: Best X-Mas present you ever got when you were a kid?



NW: A Nintendo Wii.

AU: Worst Holiday experience you can remember?

NW: The year before I got the Nintendo Wii, because I didn't get it that year.

AU: Do you prefer Santa Claus or Krampus?

NW: I think Krampus is sick, but I'm not really tapped in like that so I'll go with Santa. Also, Krampus isn't real.

AU: Who are your favourite current local bands?

NW: Crabe and Caniche, those guys are legends.

AU: Is there anything else you would like to add?

NW: Eat your vegetables, and brush your teeth every day.

AU: How do people find you online?

NW: Our Instagram is @fucknowaves, and that's where we post most of our stuff.



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ABSOLUTE HORROR



ABSOLUTE HORROR

Jeff Burr and The Sequel Heroes (Merry Christmas)

By Vince D'Amato

The past few months have seen the passing of some serious genre film icons, notably William Friedkin and Richard Roundtree – but some went sadly under the radar, like Marina Cicogna, who was the 20-year partner of Italian actress Florinda Bolkan (*Flavia the Heretic*, *Lizard in a Woman's Skin*) and who was the Italian producer of *Belle de Jour* and the Academy Award-Winning *Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion* (1970) – and the untimely passing of horror filmmaker Jeff Burr on October 10th this year. Jeff Burr directed many genre films but was most known for his horror sequels, including *The Stepfather II*, *Pumpkinhead II*: *Bloodwings* and *Leatherface: The Texas Chainsaw Massacre Part III*. I'm going to dive a little into Jeff Burr's work – although at this point you might be thinking, Yes, great, but it's Christmas, and surely there's a little Holiday Horror you could be talking about? – Well, yes, we're definitely going to talk about that too, and while I might take you the long way around before we get there, we will get there, I promise...

Leatherface: The Texas Chainsaw Massacre Part III (1990)

A very young Viggo Mortensen starred in this official TCM sequel, which did have a bit of cash backing it, but new director Jeff Burr was given precious little time to pull it all together; he was thrown into the project literally days before production and was to delivery on some big expectations. While the film is abundantly gory, the rushed nature of the production wincingly shows itself throughout, but so does its heart, and despite Burr's own disappointment in the final product (he lobbied to get his name taken off the film, but this was impossible as all of the theatrical release prints had already been struck with his name on it), the UNRATED version of the film does deliver the gore and the thrills along with some fan service (thanks to actor Ken Forre as a militant survivalist in one of the film's key roles) and the overall horrifying set decor and art design. This is third-best of all the Texas Chainsaw films.

Pumpkinhead II: Bloodwings (1994)

Even with a lower budget than his Texas Chainsaw sequel, *Pumpkinhead 2* was far more polished and included a lot of sly horror-humour and more fan service thanks to genre star Linnea Quigley. This is the film that really showcased Jeff Burr's talents as a 90's horror director. I actually like this sequel better than Stan Winston's original – horror blasphemy, I know it, but I can't help it, I have a

soft spot for tongue-in-cheek horror, and this one also has a bit of an eighties Stephen King vibe going on. Ami Dolenz and Soleil Moon-Frye play the main protagonists in a group of teenagers who resurrect the Pumpkinhead demon and then have to get the thing back in its proverbial box as it terrorizes their small town.

...I won't spend more time running through Jeff Burr's directorial catalogue of horrors, suffice to say some of his other titles are well worth exploring... but for now, I'm going to shift to some other stellar horror sequels...

Night of the Demons 2 (1994)

Much like *Pumpkinhead 2*, and also like most



of (if not all of) the proceeding horror sequels, *Night of the Demons 2* shifted from the original dead-teenager/slasher format into a somewhat transcendent, goofy, humorous movie that can be viewed as a stand-alone. Amidst this, we're also treated to a spoof of nun-sploration movies with the leading bad girls' sharp-tongued humour, directed by Brian Trenchard-Smith (if you don't know this director I'd implore you to look him up) – and once again, I prefer this sequel to the original

Hello, Mary Lou: Prom Night 2 (1987)

You probably guessed it, I liked this we-didn't-know-we-needed-it-until-we-got-it sequel better than the original. The tongue-in-cheek take on the quintessential Canadian slasher, also boasts some super-weird hallucinatory

nightmare scenarios, which I can only presume were influenced by the wildly popular *Nightmare on Elm Street* series of the time. Regardless, I love this elevated entry as a wonderfully bizarre guilty pleasure – and I obviously love that the title rhymes, too.

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre Part 2 (1986)

For my money, director Tobe Hooper completely outdid himself here; as good horror sequels are clearly apt to do, there is a heavy amount of humour injected into this sequel by Hooper and his screenwriter, as well as some liberal spicing of self-parody – all working together in this gleefully shocking gore-fest that

stars Caroline Williams as "Stretch", a radio DJ who accidentally records one of Leatherface's murders via a phone-in caller... Enter Dennis Hopper, who plays a relative of one of the victims of the first film, out for vengeance and justice, chainsaw-style. There is nothing not to like about his movie, and it's totally bonkers yet makes total sense in its own enclosed nut-ball world. The closing shot of Caroline Williams pretty much sums the whole bloody affair up perfectly. I seriously can't recommend this film enough, not just as one of my favourite horror sequels, but one of my favourite films of all time.

*...Didn't I say I was taking the long way around to Christmas-town? I'll admit that my first idea for this article was going to be a list of underrated horror films that had never survived past VHS, and it was going to feature Brian Yuzna's *Silent Night, Deadly Night 4: Initiation* – an idea that I'd dropped when I accidentally discovered that Lionsgate's Vestron Video label had re-released that one (along with its sequel *Silent Night, Deadly Night 5: The Toy Maker*), onto Blu-ray last December.*

Silent Night, Deadly Night 4: Initiation (1990)

This one was formerly one of my tip-top "lost" horror films (first and last seen on VHS) until it

suddenly became un-lost thanks to the Blu-ray re-release. *Silent Night, Deadly Night 4: Initiation* falls into the early canon of horror & Body Horror that includes *Society* and *Bride of Re-Animator*, having been written by the same screenwriters Woody Kieth and Rick Fry – the story for *SNDN4* came from Yuzna directly, and even without knowing that, it's abundantly clear that the story for this film existed outside of the *Silent Night, Deadly Night* franchise which, like most of the horror franchises talked about here, began its life cycle as a dead-teenager slasher flick. The fact that Yuzna's story about a spunky female journalist who becomes the fixation of a murderously intense coven, takes place during the Christmas season is almost arbitrary, although it does lend to some standout Xmas horror set pieces. Woody Kieth's script contains a lot of Kafka-esque visuals and references, and it's one of the best underrated (and nearly forgotten) Christmas Horror flicks around.

Thanksgiving (2023)

With what feels likely to be the final installment/extension of the Grindhouse cinematic universe (it has been 16 years, after all), Eli Roth's expansion on his own exploitation fake trailer *Thanksgiving*



is actually way better than it seemingly has any right to be at face value. I'm not sure if this is due to the fact that Roth hired an outside screenwriter for this, but it feels like a sort of remake of Roth's original trailer idea, a la *Evil Dead 2* vs. the first *Evil Dead* – sort of an extension on the theme, but also kind of a remake at the same time. But I don't think fans of the original Grindhouse would be disappointed, and if you happen to be going into this cold, well, for my money it was Roth's best horror film since his freshman film *Cabin Fever*. It really doesn't do any wrong, if you're ready to be taken on the Thanksgiving ride.

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INK SLINGERS



DYLAN PANZENBOECK

Tattoo Artist at Urge Studios

Interview by Brady Tighe

AU: Who are we talking to today and what are your skills to pay the bills?

Dylan: Hi I'm Dylan, I do tattoos that come through the front door. I like to keep them clean and black.

AU: Where did you see your first tattoos and when?

D: I saw my first real fresh, modern tattoos at Crazy Benny's skateshop on Tillicum rd. 1988.

AU: What style of tattooing are you best known for?

Dylan: I'm best known for black and grey tattoos.



AU: Who did you apprentice under?

D: I didn't have an apprenticeship but I was fortunate to work with many people during the 90's in Victoria.

AU: What makes your shop unique?

D: I think Urge is unique because it supports all styles of tattooing.

AU: Who are some of your biggest inspirations in tattooing?

D: My biggest inspiration would have to be Jesse Dicey.

AU: What is the most popular tattoo in Victoria in 2023? What pays your bills?



D: The most popular tattoos in 2023 are dots and squiggles. I pay the bills with cover ups.

AU: Any advice for young up and coming tattoo artists?

D: Advice for up and coming tattooers is do what you wanna do.

AU: What's the craziest request for a tattoo you have ever gotten?

D: The craziest tattoo request was a lady who wanted to burn candles and incense. I said no way.

AU: If you weren't an artist, what would you want to be?

D: If I wasn't an artist, I would get into athletics.

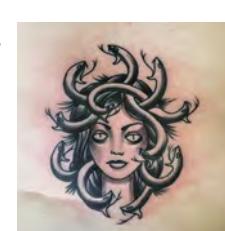


AU: Upcoming plans?

D: I plan on refining and improving my tattoos and doing more stuff from my sketchbook.

AU: What do you want the readers to know about your shop?

D: People can get all their tattoo needs at Urge. We have five amazing artists with tons of experience.

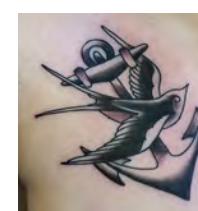


AU: What do you want the readers to know about you as a Tattooist?

D: People should know that I love designing custom tattoos to fit the individual and that I'm here for them.

AU: Where can people find your work online?

D: People can find me on Instagram @ urgedylan.



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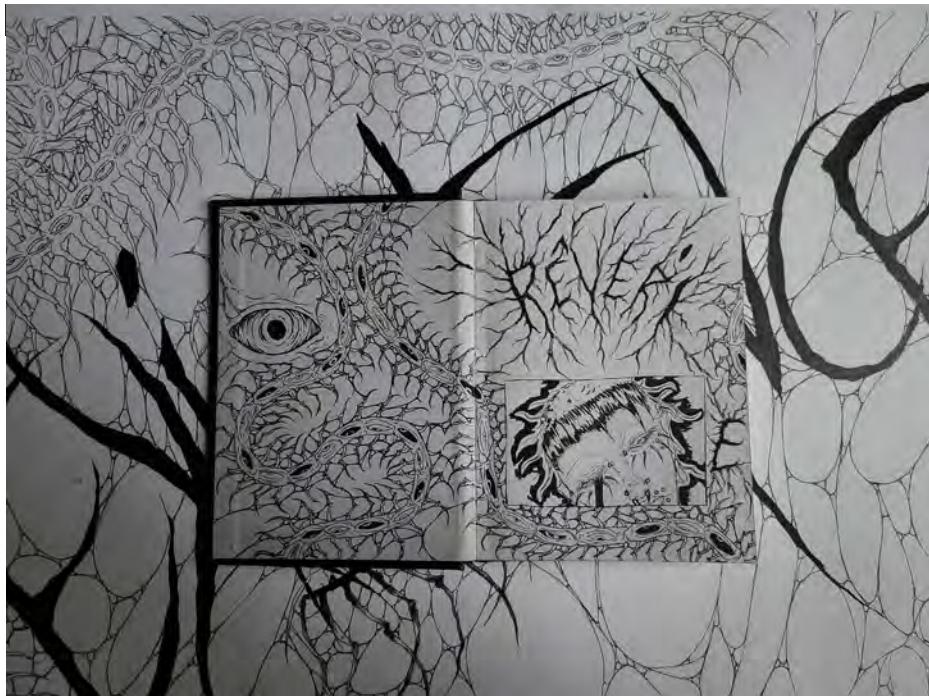
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INK SLINGERS



ZPUSK

Organic Body Horror Tattooing

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Absolute Underground: Who are you and what style of tattooing are you best known for?

Zpusk: My artist's name is Zpusk I go by them. I'm known for my own style of tattooing: Organic Body Horror. Zpusk translates to 'descent' in Ukrainian. I love the idea of descending into madness!

AU: How long have you been a tattoo artist? What got you started?

Z: I have been tattooing for 3 years. When I was 16, I discovered the world of tattooing by going into a studio to get pierced. When I saw all the tattoo creations I was really inspired! I knew that I wanted to do this job for the rest of my life! I recently started tattooing free hand designs and am really looking forward to doing more!



AU: How would you describe the tattoo art that you created?

Z: Body Horror Organic is a tapestry of human bodies, insects and plants, all within a fairly dark universe.

AU: What makes your shop unique? How would you describe the shop's style?

Z: I work at Arakna Art Corporels on St. Laurent in Montreal! Above all, we're a group of friends with strong values. We value each other a lot and promote accessibility. I like to call the theme of the store "dark rave."

AU: Do you offer piercings there as well?

Z: Yes, Arakna specializes in piercings in gold and titanium body jewelry.

AU: What's the craziest tattoo you have ever done?

Z: This spring, I created and led a BDSM-style live art performance. Wearing a latex mask (I could barely see), I tattooed a person with their arms and legs handcuffed. The tattoos I created were totally improvised, no stencils, no prior ideas, just straight inspiration onto their skin. It was crazy. The music was fucking nice, too!



AU: What else do you want the readers to know about you as a tattooist?

Z: For me, tattooing is about an exchange of strength between two people. The experience also allows people to feel better in their body afterwards, it's a reclaiming of the body.

AU: Anything else to mention?

Z: I want to take this opportunity to remind people that consent in tattooing is really important. If you're not comfortable proceeding for whatever reason, or you want to change your design for example it's important to speak up!



AU: How do people find you online?

Z: I'm mainly on Instagram: "Zpusk_tattoo" but you can find me on Facebook under the same name! You can also find me selling my art at local underground markets and events here in Montreal!



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LIAM VS THE WORLD



LIAM VS THE WORLD

Interview with Director Lee Roy Kunz

By Liam Crocker

Earlier in the season I had the privilege and pleasure of interviewing newcomer director Lee Roy Kunz to talk about his awesome new horror film, 'Deliver Us'.

L: I just wanna start by saying I loved the movie! You were able to do so much with FX and locations, considering it was an independent film. What was the budget?

LRK: Thank you! It was very low budget. We aren't supposed to say exactly but it was above 1.5 million though, if not right around there. The biggest thing was being able to shoot in Estonia.

Part of film school is teaching filmmakers how to make films like this for a much lower budget. I've been in that iffy place in my career - am I gonna be able to make this happen as a filmmaker? I've been working on this other film for 12 years that I'm finally finishing. Funds raised in pieces from lots of different places over the years. This film came down to putting my own money into it, and putting off building a house.

L: Your wife must really love you!

LRK: She's been so supportive! And this was before having a kid.

L: So, correct me if I'm wrong but you're a Catholic? Can you tell me how your faith influenced your filmmaking?

LRK: I am a Catholic, yes. Catholic magazine just reviewed the film, saying it was "blasphemy", and

basically just ripping it. Catholics compared to a lot of Protestants are more supportive of this kind of art because they don't take such a literal interpretation of the Bible. Most Catholics don't take Revelations as a revelation of how the world's gonna end. It was a genre of storytelling - Apocalyptic literature. Cliches and conventions to comment on their persecution in Rome. The Jesuit magazine has actually written a favorable review, I'm told. The Bible is the OG horror story! So many different examples of the most horrible stuff happening, from child sacrifice to incest. King David sending a general to die so that he can sleep with his widow. Countless, immoral fucked up things.

L: I noticed in the film that you worked in some themes about foundation myth, specifically Zoroastrianism and Indo-

European myths that seem to support a lot of what we have now for religion. Can you speak on that?

LRK: Zoroastrianism is the perfect one to base it all in since it predates Christianity. You could say right at the same time that Judaism starts talking about Yahweh. You don't really know first started talking about a single God but they kind of all did at the same time. The duality of a good force and evil force. Something we wanna expand on is the world religions, they're all grasping at truths. I do think there are certain belief systems and cultures that are better for humans, but it contains all the religions. We all have a relationship with God and it's just a different language.

The babies in the film were amazing actors! I was shocked at how well you were able to capture their expressions. That's uncommon.

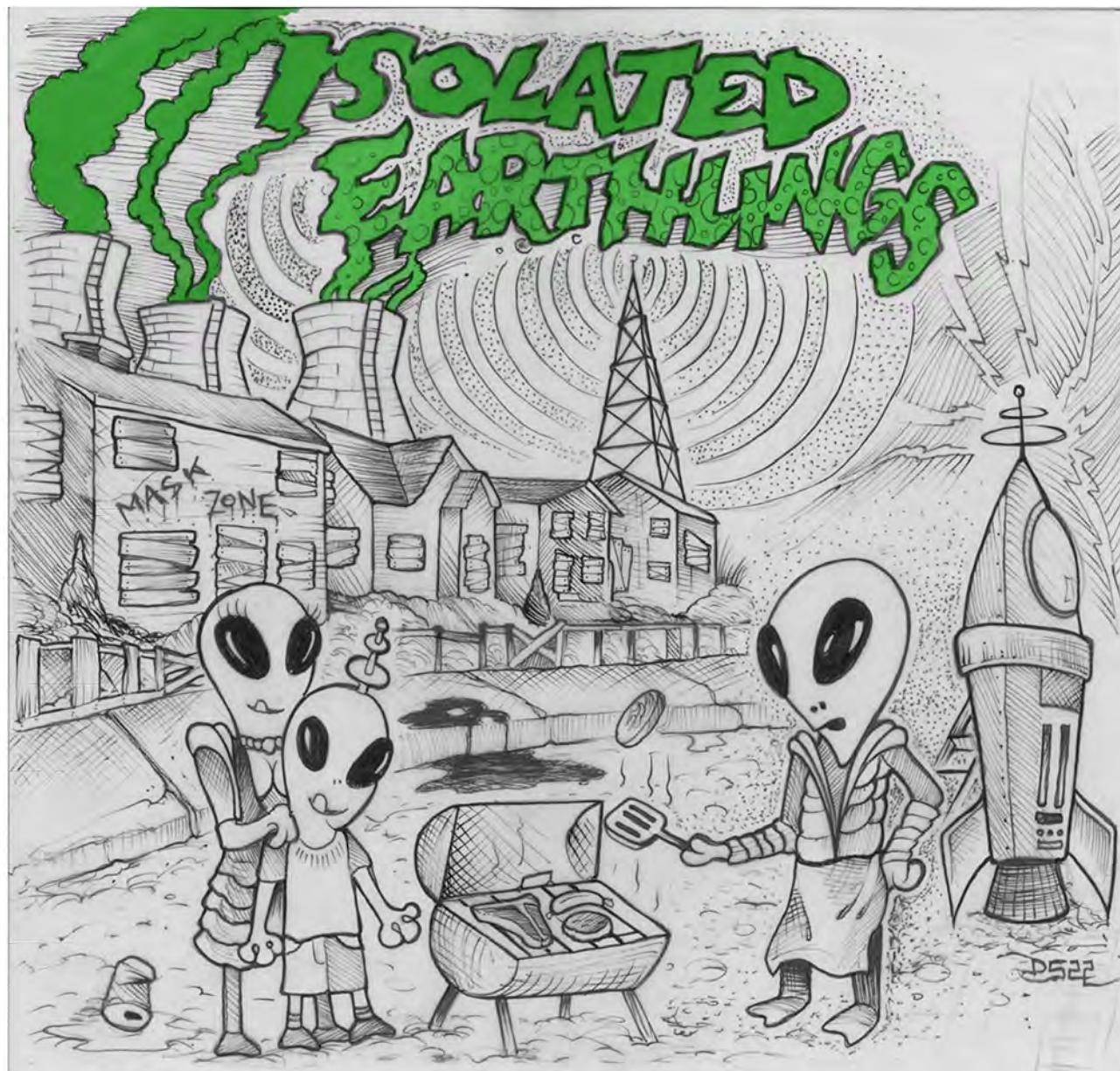
LRK: That's just patience. When people say you shouldn't work with dogs or babies - I had a checklist in terms of everything I needed.

Everyone just take a break, relax - others are gonna be nearby, We're gonna film the babies for a bit and then just check off when those moments happen. The mothers will come

for a bit, comfort them, then we go back. It's easier to get the babies working than it is some actors who are difficult to work with. They're not gonna shoot their scene till they get their coffee the right way or something like that.

L: Thanks so much for the interview! Can't wait to see what you have in store for us in the future, and I'm sure we'll be hearing from you again.

LRK: I appreciate that! It was awesome!



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VISITING THE GNAR SHACK

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Interview with Jam Lord Brian Desfosses

By John Carlow

AU: Who am I talking to?

Gnar Shack: Hi! I'm Brian (Brains) Desfosses. Thanks for reaching out.

AU: Where are you located?

GS: 3944 Quadra St. Literally right beside the chicks bathroom at the Phoenix Bar and Grill. The Phoenix is what some of us call, "the new Logan's Pub" (RIP). They have become one of the few places in Victoria where all types of bands can come and play in a safe and bouncer-free environment. They also have a great staff and supportive and super friendly owners (shout out to Mike and Jenny!).

AU: How did the Gnar Shack get started?

GS: I opened The Gnar Shack Rehearsal Studio in December of 2022. One of the reasons was

to practice with the five bands I'm in: The Gnar Gnars, Klawalka, Stinkhorn, Party Animals (Turbonegro Tribute) and a new band yet to be named, but I think it should be called "Sciatica" or "New Hip" to reflect our maturity. The other reason is to continue offering a pay to play room where I supply a full back line for people to rehearse, jam or just practice alone.

I first started being a Jam Lord when I took over the Hillside Whorehouse Rehearsal Space from Glen Bitters (LID) about 10 years ago. It consisted of two rooms and a common area (which Glen ran for a good 10 years). I quickly turned the common area into a third Jam room/recording studio and recorded The Gnar's and Klawalka's first albums. I also built a stage for live shows and opened an after-hours booze can. After five years of crazy good times we had to move. But was it over? Fuck no! We moved to The Art Farm for a year, then my back yard, and then finally here.

AU: Is the space haunted/possessed in any way shape or form?

GS: I dunno. I think my microphone is possessed though, every time I use it, it sounds like shit!

AU: What services do you offer that can be discussed in a family-oriented publication like AU?

GS: I mean the room is yours to do whatever you want. You can use it for your nephew's reassignment surgery for all I care. We just lean towards the music side, by providing the scene some affordable jam time.



AU : Tell us anything you can about rates for bands wanting to take advantage of your space.

GS: Our rates are 25\$ per hour for the room. The room has a mixing board, powered monitors, a drum kit, Marshall guitar cabinet, a bass cabinet, and heads.

AU : Any strange events since you opened for business?

GS: Well, being attached to the Phoenix, we never know what to expect.

AU: Did there really used to be a hot tub where the GS is now?

GS: Okay, the space used to be the women's shower/ hot tub room for the fitness center in the

80's. Thinking of getting the sauna working again.

AU : Would the GS hold up in an earthquake?

GS: Oh, of course! I predict it will be the only thing standing at the end of days.

AU: How does one contact the GS to take advantage of you (or your goods/ services)

GS: For all questions and scheduling:

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JOSEPH REITMAN

Very Bad Santa

Interview by Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous and or infamous for?

Joseph Reitman: I am Joseph Reitman and I'm an actor. I was the Very Bad Santa in Happy!, "Creepy Ed" in the Punisher, and I've been on a bunch of other shows and movies.

AU: When did you first catch the acting bug?

JR: I did a play in London in high school and after one show there was a crowd waiting for me, and that kinda made me think I might not suck at this, so why not give it a shot.

AU: What was the first role you ever landed?

JR: Well, the first "professional" job I got was playing a thug on show called South of Sunset. It got me my SAG card. I was on the 3rd episode. The show was so bad it was cancelled after the first episode, so my episode never aired on TV

AU: What are some of the projects you are most proud of on your film and television resume?

JR: Playing Santa in Happy! was my favorite job, but there are a bunch that meant a lot to me. "The Punisher" was my favorite show on TV at the time I, so I loved doing that. I was on "The Shield" where I played a guy who made grandma porn. The Perfect Storm, Lady In The Water, and of course getting to work with Kevin Smith on Jay & Silent Bob Strike Back and the reboot was a dream. I was in also in Townies and Married with Children (I played Kelly Bundy's boyfriend.)

AU: Tell us about your role on Married With Children. What was it like working with Ed O'Neill (Al Bundy) and Christina Applegate (Kelly Bundy). Did you do your own stunt work when Al Bundy slams your head into the door for dating his daughter?

JR: Hah! Yes, I did my own stunts, which is part of why I got brought back a few times. I loved it. I had Christina Applegate's picture on my wall in college and told my friends I could play her boyfriend. Then I did, and I was so excited I could hardly contain myself.



AU: How many Kevin Smith movies have you worked on? What characters do you play? How did you first meet Kevin? Was it cool to be invited back to revisit your character in 2019's Jay and Silent Bob Reboot?

JR: I was just in Strike Back and Reboot. I played the 1st AD in both of them. I met Kevin when my ex-wife was being considered for Strike Back, and we had lunch with Kevin and his wife in LA. Then I was thrilled when Kevin brought me back for the reboot.

AU: This is the Christmas issue and you played

one of the sickest, creepiest, very bad Santas ever on the show Happy! that was based on a comic book series by Grant Morrison and Darick Robertson. Tell us how you got the job, what the character was all about, and how you approached the role.

JR: Brian Taylor who produced, directed and co-wrote the TV scripts directed a few movies I had acted in the past. He's my friend, and he saw me do a play in LA and afterwards said he had an

AU: What do you consider your break-out role? Like where you thought you had really made it in the world of Hollywood?

JR: Different jobs opened different doors, but "Married with Children" was a big break. Townie, was huge because it was my first series contract. The Perfect Storm was my first

major movie role, Also, Clueless, because it was a big deal just to be in that movie, and still is.

AU: What was it like working on the cast and

crew of the Perfect Storm with George Clooney, Mark Wahlberg, and John C. Reilly? Knowing the fate of the crew in the real life story are you glad you didn't get on the boat?

JR: I don't think about my characters fates, because I would be upset if I died too much. Working with those guys was a blast. They were all kind and fun to work with. George and Mark particularly have been very kind to me over

the years.



idea. He called soon after and said he was pitching the studio to have me play Santa...and I was offered the role. I was flattered and a little shocked. I knew the comic, so I was going to try and get skinny and look strung out, but Brian then said he wanted me big, so I started carb loading and powerlifting. Then I saw the costume and started focusing on looking and moving like a rhino. I spent a day begging for money on the streets of NY, listened to X-Mas music every day all day, hung X-Mas lights in my apartment, put pictures up of imaginary friends, pictures of chris Meloni all over and drew horns on them,

slept with a sock on my left hand. It was all weird method actor stuff, but it helps.

AU: I believe with you playing this demented Santa role may put you at the very top of the list as far as nasty Santas go. Do you agree? Who are some other bad Santa contenders you can think of?

JR: Thank you, very kind. I love the movie Bad Santa with Billy Bob, he was great.

AU: What are some of your favourite X-Mas

movies of all time? Any favorite horror Christmas movies as well?

JR: Die Hard is my favorite. None other is close for me.

AU: Best present you ever got when you were a kid?

JR: I will list a few: Evel Knievel Huffy bicycle. My first Walkman. Micronauts. And one Christmas my dad gave me a cassette of The Beatles' Magical Mystery Tour, that made me super happy.

AU: Do you prefer Santa Claus or Krampus? Why?

JR: Santa Claus, because I played him.

AU: Any Hollywood lowlights to share?

JR: There are too many moments to list, and none worth dwelling on. Hollywood can be cruel, but you need to be able to shrug it off or it will drive you nuts.

AU: What led you to embrace sobriety?

JR: That is such a long story. The most important thing to know was that I was killing myself, and I realized that if I wanted a career I needed to remove this obstacle that was not helping me achieve my dreams and goals. I am so



lucky to have this career, and on Dec 10th it will be 30 years without a drink.

AU: What was it like working on the Punisher series for Netflix? What did you do in the episode called "The Abyss"?

JR: I play Creepy Ed... I work in the morgue and Karen from Daredevil comes to see me to get some information. It was a great set to work on.

AU: Is it true you wrote an issue of Spider-Man for Marvel Comics as well? What was the story about and who did the artwork for it?

JR: Yup. Spider Man Unlimited #14. Ron Garney was my artist and he's great. The story was about a guy who has a job working for something called SCUDS (superhero clean up department of sanitation) and he is assigned Spider-Man.

AU: What did it feel like winning a huge online poker tournament? Who were you playing against? What did you do with the money?

JR: It was on a site called Ultimate Bet and I won \$266,000. There were 2770 players. I took some of the money and produced my first short film called Leo, which got me other work...and I used some of the money to play in the World Series of Poker.



AU: What's on the horizon for you now that the SAG Actors strike has ended?

JR: Hopefully to be back on set soon!

AU: Do you offer acting classes?

JR: I do. Anyone who wants info please go to www.actorwithjoe.com and feel free to reach out. Teaching is something I love to do when I'm not on set.

AU: Does your power live in your hair and if you were to cut it you would lose all your strength like in Samson and Delilah?

JR: Yes. Please, don't tell anyone.

AU: Any advice for aspiring actors/filmmakers out there.

JR: Don't be afraid to chase your dreams. Stop if you start hating it. There is no holy grail at the end of the road...the road is the holy grail. And study...study study...learn your craft...and do something for your career every day...just one thing...and you will be doing more than 90% of people.

AU: How do people find you online?

Facebook: Joseph David Reitman

Instagram: @joeugly

actingwithjoe.com

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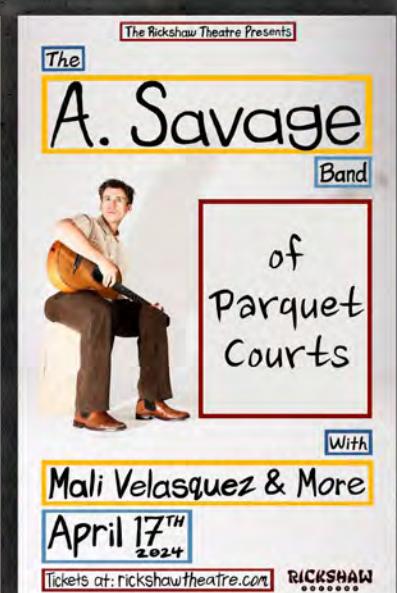
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365 PRO WRESTLING Interview with Founder and Wrestler Eddie Osbourne

By Mike "Put Me Through a Table" Croy

Welcome to Turnbuckle Sandwich! I recently had the pleasure of having an in-depth chat with Canadian independent wrestling icon Eddie Osbourne, who runs 365 Pro Wrestling. Eddie is an active performer in the company, and also runs the Pro Wrestling Academy out of Campbell River B.C.

Absolute Underground: Tell our readers at Absolute underground about yourself i.e. who are we talking with?

Eddie Osbourne: First, thank you for diving into the world of pro wrestling, and into 365 Pro Wrestling in particular. My name is Eddie Osbourne, and I have been a pro wrestler for just over 22 years. I grew up on the island, and after graduating I moved to Cambridge, Ontario to begin training. After about a year I realized that there weren't a lot of wrestling promotions in Ontario. I started working events on the weekends and ended up becoming a trainer at the school. At that point I decided I would start to promote live events, and The Pure Wrestling Association was created. We ran events in Ontario for just about 13 years before I moved back to the island and decided to open up promotion here as well. So now we run live events in Ontario and British Columbia, with Victoria being home to our biggest events.

In 2020 I renamed the Pure Wrestling Association to 365 Pro Wrestling. Lucky us, it was a leap year and also the beginning of COVID. That said, we battled through it and ran events whenever we could, no matter how few people we were allowed and did the best we could. Now we are enjoying bigger crowds, and growing the company.

AU: What makes 365 Pro Wrestling different from other wrestling companies?

EO: I think it is the amazing men and women who wrestle for us and all the fans that come out to the events. The wrestlers can work on any event in the world (as they are not under contract with anyone,) so it's the crowd that makes the group we have shine even brighter.

AU: What got you into wrestling in the first

place?

EO: It was part of my upbringing: who didn't watch Hulk Hogan, Randy Savage and the Ultimate Warrior as an 80's kid? Then watching turns into backyard wrestling, and then you see one of your buddies actually leave to become a professional. That was when I had my big realization that I could do this; when Elian Habanero left Campbell River to pursue it seriously.

AU: Who did you train with?

EO: I trained at the Hart Brothers School of Wrestling in Cambridge, Ontario. Not the legendary Hart's from Calgary, but an off shoot started by Smith Hart (the eldest of the Hart Brothers.)

My trainers were Sid Summers and Juan Ortiz. I still talk to Juan to this day and can ask him for advice any time I need to. I also was very lucky, and got even more improvement from Geza Kalman Jr., a two time UFC veteran. Geza would come to my matches, watch them, give me advice, and then train with me once a week. Carl Leduc was there for a long period as well and I learned a lot from him. I also learned from Bruiser Bedlam aka Johnny K-9 and I even got a few out-of-ring learning sessions from Waldo Von Erich.

AU: Who is your favorite opponent to wrestle and why?

EO: Krofton, Elian Habanero and Super K are my favourite opponents and its just the same reason why for all of them: they are all uber talented and bring out the very best in me as a wrestler. I had to pick three, and there are more I would love to add.

AU: Where is your favorite place to stop to eat while on the road and what do you order?

EO: Denny's is probably the favorite for me. I'm always down for a good Ricky's visit as well. But usually it will be some kind of

breakfast with bacon. Bacon or a steak with eggs is always good.

AU: Do you have a favorite type of match to compete in?

EO: I like a 3-Way match best. Although lately I've been in a few barbed wire matches.

AU: As the head trainer at a pro wrestling academy, what do you enjoy most about teaching?

EO: My favorite part of training has to be seeing the student's progress. Day one they can't do this or that, then day 10 they can, and then day 100 they can do the more complex thing they have been working on. I love seeing the trainees have their first matches and see how much it means to them to achieve a part of their dream.

AU: Who are the current champions of 365?

British Columbia

365 Pro Wrestling Champion: Devon Shooter

Global Women's Champion: Rose

Tag-team Champions: "Fallen Circus" Haviko / Zack Andrews

Combat

Champion: "Rad Dad" Ryan Spaidal

Ontario

Global Champion: "EZE" Eric Cairnie

Grand Champion: Super K

AU: What is your finishing move?

EO: The River City Driver, which is a modified Rikishi Driver.

AU: What can our readers expect from 365 in the next year?

EO: We are going to expand and run 12-14 events in Victoria in 2024. We have been at the White Eagle Polish Hall for a couple years now and we are selling it out consistently, so we are now going to include some events at the First Met Fellowship Hall (First one on February 2nd) as it has a larger capacity.

The goal is to run nearly every weekend somewhere on the island, and to also try to get a foot on the mainland.

AU: As a veteran of the industry what have you seen change about wrestling over your career?

EO: So much has changed since I started. Now anyone can open a promotion, and there are a lot of examples of what to do and not do, whereas when I started that was not the case. Also, the veterans of today are much more giving and want young talent to succeed. We also have some great schools in BC. I think we have a good one on the Island with our Pro Wrestling Academy and I would be remiss if I didn't put mention how good the students out of the Lions Gate Dojo in Vancouver are. It's so great to see everyone working towards bigger and better things in the world of indie wrestling.

AU: Do you have a favorite beer?

EO: I am a fan of Canadian, and also a huge fan of Whistle Buoy Brewery's lager. But I will drink anything as long as it's cold!

AU: What's your entrance theme music and why did you choose it?

EO: Currently I am using "Can't be Broken" by Lil Wayne. I was in a feud and thought the whole "can't be broken," part was kind of symbolic for where I was at: You can beat me down, but I can't be broken.

I also use "Wrestling Personified" by Dan-E O who is a fantastic artist out of Toronto, Ontario. He took a song Eilan Habanero wrote for me about my wrestling character, and then just took it to another level with his ability to record in a studio and add to it.

AU: Who should our readers be on the look out for as potential up and coming stars?

EO: Right now Judas Icarus and Travis Williams are shining so bright that I think they're stars already. Both of them are just waiting to be picked up by a big promotion.

But if you want some future stars that are starting to shine bright today on the BC Indies I would probably say Maxwell Benson, Rose, Casey Ferriera and Inferno.



AU: What's your favorite city and or venue to wrestle in?

EO: Nothing in my career has topped Vancouver, BC's Commodore Ballroom.

AU: If you could wrestle any wrestler from any time as a dream opponent who would it be?

EO: I think this answer changes as much as the wind here on Vancouver Island. There are so many talented wrestlers past and present. I would love to share a ring with Shawn Michaels or Ric Flair.

AU: What's the funniest thing you've ever seen happen at a show?

EO: I once shit my pants, but that was not as funny to me then as it is now. When I put them in a fellow wrestler's bag, his expression was amazing. I'm lucky he didn't kill me.

AU: Have you sustained any significant injuries over your career and if so what was the worst?

EO: I have had multiple concussions, several before we even knew how bad concussions are.

AU: Who's your favorite band?

EO: Three Days Grace is good, but I am really into hip-hop and been enjoying Jadakiss from the LOX.

AU: What's a storyline from your career you're particularly proud of?

EO: One of my favorites to date might be a short/small one we did where I lost the PWA Championship to Judas Icarus in a three-way where after I was eliminated I wanted to help Nolan James win it, but it backfired.

AU: Is there anything you'd like the readers of absolute underground to know as we wrap things up?

EO: Pro Wrestling is fun. If you ever get the chance to go to an event, you should, because it is an experience like nothing else. You get to see physical theatre, enjoy a great beer (we currently have the best Whistle Buoy,) and get lost in our world for a few hours.

If you're looking for more information on upcoming shows or wish to purchase tickets check out canadianprowrestling.com



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THE CYBERTRONIC SPREE

Rockin' Robots In Disguise

Interview with Hotrod and Arcee
By Irabot "Prime" Hunter and Ray

"Megatron"
MacKay

More than meets the eye, The Cybertronic Spree are here on Earth with one critical mission: To party like it's 1986! This band of Transformers has been brought together by the power of rock 'n roll and they can't be stopped. Join Hotrod, Arcee, Rumble, Unicron, Soundwave, Bumblebee, Shockwave and a Quintesson as they prove they've got the power to light your darkest hour. Known across the galaxy for having cast aside their warring factions in the search for the ultimate party, these rock-stars in disguise play music from The Transformers: The



Movie, hit film and anime songs, and video game covers. They blend their love for the '80s and '80s metal into an energon-fueled, unforgettable live show!

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are your skills to pay the bills?

Cybertronic Spree

(Arcee): You're speaking with Arcee and Hot Rod from the Cybertronic Spree and the rent is too damn high!

Cybertronic Spree (Hot Rod): What's up Absolute Underground! Thanks for having us!

AU: What was your first introduction to Transformers?

CS(HR): Transformers have always been around for us. I watched them when I was young and thought they were cool. Then I watched them as an adult and thought they were even cooler!

CS(A): It was the original Transformers: The Movie's bitchin' soundtrack. I was hanging out with Hot Rod and he put it on, and I was hooked.

AU: Give us a brief history of your band.

CS(HR): We were built for one nite only back in 2013. That's about as long as I thought I could keep a band made up of enemies together on stage. I mean I was working with Autobots and Decepticons, and weird mechanical monsters? It was a ton of work! Billy Campbell, the Rocketeer himself introduced us to an unsuspecting crowd in Toronto, Canada and, we sucked!

CS(A): It's true! And back then, Unicron was just a floating head!

CS(HR): But some humans filmed the thing and put it up online. And Earth went bananas! I swore to myself that if we were to keep going we'd need to become like the Pokemon theme song: struggling to be the very best- like no one ever was!

AU: Who are the members of The Cybertronic Spree and what are their special abilities?

CS(HR): The members of the Cybertronic Spree fluctuate but our core group is made up of eight: Unicron the Devourer of Worlds, is our lead guitarist. After Eons of traveling the cosmos consuming countless worlds full of sentient life, the Unicron has absorbed unfathomable depths of musical acumen. Their special ability is growing a beard. And then there are 7 others...

CS(A): Yeah, me and Hot Rod (who sings and rips on the bass,) and then Quintesson is our mysterious song-smith. They're the literal brains of the outfit specializing in sonic manipulations, and then when we play live, they're on guitar. Rumble is our heavy handed, hard headed drummer. They can punch more holes in things than anyone. Then there is Soundwave who is superior at everything! Ugh, it's annoying. They dance, use weaponry, and play synths. And of course, our



big gun: Shockwave, who is also our drummer, and have you seen him go on a wild drum solo? Damn. Their special ability is mixing cocktails. Oh yeah, and there's Bumblebee, who is way too cool for us now that they're big and famous. Occasionally, they grace us with their presence and shake their hips.

AU: What inspired you to base your band off of the Robots in Disguise?

CS(HR): Arcee said it; The Transformers: The Movie soundtrack. It's the de-facto best album your planet has ever produced. The incomparable talents of Vince DiCola, Stan Bush, Weird Al Yankovic, Kick Axe, NRG, and Lion all combine together like some sort of mythic Megazord of Music; or visionary Voltron of Variety; like a cosmic Combiner of Cacophony! It was something that needed to be celebrated. It's pretty much the artistic high point of your entire civilization. I was kind of surprised no one had done it before, honestly.

AU: What can people expect from your live show?

CS(HR): You can expect the biggest car crash in the galaxy! There's robots on the stage, robots in the crowd, robots crowd surfing and robots shaking the rafters. It's a spectacle that calls back to childhood nostalgia and warps into the now. Existential gonzo singalong fun.

AU: What sorts of things will people find on your set list?

CS(HR): We're not a band that stays in their lane. We started out performing the TF:TM soundtrack but we quickly decided that what we really wanted to do was celebrate the things we love like a heartfelt mix-tape from a bunch of bots! Then that morphed into us wanting to write our own music that we felt would fit right into all these things we loved. So you'll find classic rock hits like "Immigrant Song" right up there with the "ThunderCats" theme song and Stan Bush's "The Touch" which then goes into a rendition of classic video game "Doom" or Weird Al Yankovic's "Dare to Be Stupid" before ending up with an original song about how nobody tells us what to do with our toys!

AU: How were your recent shows in Victoria and Vancouver? I understand they were 3 years in the making?

CS(A): It was unreal finally being on the west coast and playing these shows after waiting so long. The people were hungry for it and we were ecstatic to rock out there, and the shows were packed and sweaty and it was two perfect nights of rock n' roll.

CS(HR): We got a bit wild with those shows. I think we had just been waiting for so long there was all this pent up energy. When we finally got on stage we were barely holding it together. It was some of the most over the top, messy fun we've ever had. We definitely need to come back to Vancouver and Victoria again.

AU: How did you assemble your costumes? What is it like performing in them?

CS(A): we always assemble ourselves with sound effects.

CS(HR): If you're not making a 'chi-cho-

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chu-cha-chick' when you get ready, then you're doing it wrong. Performing for us is difficult; we're not from your planet and your instruments don't come naturally to us so it took us a while to get really good at it. But we look really cool playing them!

AU: What albums have the Cybertronic Spree released to date?

CS(A): Our most recent release is Ravage, our first full length of original songs. Before that, we released Transformers 1986, which is our album of covers of the Transformers: The Movie Soundtrack. Along with that, we released an EP called Darkest Hour which contained our versions of the bonus tracks of the original Transformers Movie soundtrack. And for good measure, our very first release was our first original single, "Cybertronic Warrior."

AU: Are there a lot of robot groupies or robo-sexuals on the road?

CS(A): No comment!

CS(HR): Yes! Earth is full of them! We've been known to sign the occasional body part.

AU: Tell us about your future engagements/albums?

CS(HR): Right now we're planning our next headlining tour in 2024 for Ravage. It's an album of all-killer-no-filler tracks that deserves a live show and we're excited to share it with the world. Plus we've got a bunch of music videos we're making to go along with that- so it'll keep us busy for a while!

CS(A): We've also got sights on formally putting out some of our non-transformers covers that we perform live. Humans have been asking for it, so we want to deliver.

AU: Tell us all about your latest tour.

CS(A): It was awesome. We got to tour and perform with the mighty Mac Sabbath and Playboy Manbaby, and play places we'd never been to before. Like Peoria. You ever heard of Peoria? I think we played over 30 shows across the U.S. and we must have crisscrossed the country at least 5 times. It was honestly an autobot's dream come true.

AU: Do you keep up on Transformers media?



Any thoughts on the new shows, comics and toys?

CS(A): I don't rabidly keep up on Transformers media, but when the TF community takes notice of a new show or something, my sensors perk up. Like, recently, a bunch of fans were pointing me at this cool fan-made animation called Arcee: Dreams of Daicon by 87Render. It's just got this

chill, 80s vibe and you can tell that the director is using Transformers as their sandbox to explore new and different things, and that's really what I love about the TF community and TF media!

CS(HR): Arcee really nailed this; the community around Transformers exploring and remixing media is super exciting. People have grown up with this IP and I like that it can take on new, weird, and unexpected forms; much like us, a band of literal Transformers, rocking out live.

AU: Who is your favourite transformer (can also pick one Autobot and one Decepticon if needed)?

CS(A): I love the Sharkticons! They're so cute once you get to know them, and they never stop smiling.

CS(HR): Metroplex.

There is no need to pay Decepticono Fees!

AU: Excluding Transformers The Movie (which your band is based off of), which do you consider the best?

CS(A): If we're talking about movies in general, some of my favourites include Mad Max: Fury Road and Blade Runner 2048. If we're talking about TF movies/shows, then Beast Wars.

CS(HR): Some of my favourite movies are Akira and Kung Fury. This year my favourite has

definitely been The Creator. With regards to Transformers media: BUMBLEBEE and Last Stand of The Wreckers are amazing. In comics, I'm excited to see Robert Kirkman throwing down on Transformers!

AU: If you could hire anyone to do your album art, who would you pick?

CS(A): It would be a robo-dream come true to have Hajime Sorayama do album art for us.

AU: How do you recharge your Energon Cubes on the road?

CS(A): It's all about the hot spice, baby.

CS(HR): When we're on tour I have the responsibility of being the DD: designated drinker. It's not a task I take lightly but seriously, I love having drinks with people who come to shows. Meeting people really recharges me.

AU: Any plans for the Holidays this year?

CS(A): Every holiday season, the entire Spree gathers for a big, energon-fueled year-end party. It'll be good to see everyone, including Spike and Bumblebee, and maybe even Kup! Last year we held the party at Unicron's place and it was really cozy and there was lots to consume.

CS(HR): It's been a wild year full of change and I'm excited to spend some quality time with everyone going over it. We may not be here for a long time but we're definitely here for a good time and it's something we feel really privileged to share while we can.

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DEAD BOB

Life Like

Interview with John Wright

Interview by Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for?

Dead Bob: John Wright here, formerly of NoMeansNo, the Hanson Bros. and the Show Business Giants.

AU: What is the origin story of your latest musical project Dead Bob?

DB: After having my life consumed by what was to be an ill-fated attempt at developing a brewpub in Powell River, Covid happened, and like so many other people that suddenly gave me

time. I had many musical ideas and demos from over the years and thought to revisit them for my own enjoyment and perhaps complete some of the songs. All very DIY, as I'm just recording in my workshop. I was very happy with the results I was getting and ended up doing quite a bit of recording. In 2022, I decided what the hell, perhaps I should just self-release an album on Bandcamp for the fun of it. With the help of some friends, I formulated and completed nine songs for what was to be the album Life Like, released in April of 2023. When we had to close the doors of the pub in January 2023, it took on a bit more of a serious approach. I though perhaps I had to get back into the game.

AU: Who else is in the band and what would it say on their musical resumes?

DB: Dead Bob is myself, Byron Slack from the Invasives, Ford Pier, author of eleven solo albums, Veda Hille, Reostatics, Roots Roundup, DOA, Show Business Giants, and can boast having thrown Huey from the Beachcombers out of the Railway Club, Kristy Lee Audette from Rong, Pavel Bures,

and Colin MacRae from Pigment Vehicle. All but Colin played a part in completing the album.

AU: What brought you to choose the artists that are on your Dead Bob album and touring with you?

DB: My brother, Rob has writing credits for two songs, because I redid a NoMeansNo song, (the title track actually,) and finished an old

DEAD BOB



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NoMeansNo collaborative idea from well over 20 years ago that never saw the light of day, "White Stone Eyes." Life Like was again more a personal vanity project to re-envision the song and I reached out to a very talented, singer songwriter, Selena Martin, to sing with me on that song and give it a more unisex feel. She did an awesome job. Byron, who I collaborated with writing the opening track, helped me with some guitars and replaced some of my rudimentary playing and was stoked to try things live. Kristy, his partner, is a trumpet player, so she was able to replace digital horns. She also plays sings and plays guitar and keyboards, so as that kind of multi-instrumentalist, I was very stoked that she wanted to be part of the live project. Ford doesn't perform on the album, but we co-wrote one of the songs, and he was also excited to get involved with the live project. I have done a lot with Ford over the years. Even my son Aidan got into the action on one song.

Colin is someone I've known for years but I've got to know him much better in Powell River. He's a very talented bass player, and though he hadn't really played much in the last 20 years he dusted off the cobwebs and has done a really good job. Also, as the only member of the band that lives up here, we could jam regularly. Dead Bob has many voices, and it was clear to me that I would not be able to do this without having five members in the band. I think I've lucked out with some incredible musicians and friends here.

AU: Who's doing vocals? Are you doing most of them?

DB: Yes, I am doing most of the singing, apart from Selina and some backgrounds. But I can't possibly do it all live, so we have spread things around.

AU: Does Dead Bob compare to previous projects, or is it a complete departure from everything else?

DB: It is an evolution from all the music I've done in the past. I certainly have no desire to be a punk rock nostalgia band. It is important to me that the music sounds fresh, and that I continue to be creative and diverse. Plus, there are some other very talented writers in the band now, so we'll see where this all goes.

AU: What can people expect from Dead Bob's live performance? How long will your set be?

DB: The set is a little over an hour and we can certainly play 90 minutes if the crowd wants it. There are only nine songs on the album, but we have a few other things up our sleeve. We'll give 'er, don't worry.

AU: Who's Bob, and why is he dead?

DB: Well, that's a good question. Maybe one day we'll all know.

AU: It's been 34 years since the NoMeansNo album Wrong came out. Wrong is being re-released from Alternative Tentacles. How did that come about?

DB: About six years ago I approached Alternative Tentacles about getting our back catalogue



released again. They were the obvious choice. It obviously has taken some time, but they have begun getting this done. They released a single, but with the book coming out and Wrong being our most popular album, it was the obvious choice for that to be the first album put out. They are hoping to get a couple or three released every year moving forward. I think Sex Mad will be the next one.

AU: How do you feel about being the center of attention and lauded as deities of punk rock?

DB: It's obviously very flattering. I'm 62 so we'll see how long I can physically perform at the level that I want to.

AU: The book NoMeansNo: From Obscurity to Oblivion written by Jason Lamb was recently released. What are your thoughts on how it all came together?

DB: It seems to have come together very well. It also seems to have been way the fuck more work than Jason anticipated, ha!

AU: What's the best way for people to get their hands on the book?

DB: Google will direct you, I'm sure.

AU: Next Dead Bob album? Rumor is that you will have a horn section? Is the next album a ska album?

DB: You bet. Ska all the way! That's where the money's at. Or whaling songs. But we'd need a fiddle. Colin plays cello. Maybe that's too melancholy for kids these days...

AU: Touring aspirations?

DB: Going to try and be as busy as we can next year and see how we hold up.

AU: What are you listening to these days? Any essential listening in your opinion?

DB: I have always liked the "radio" format so rather enjoy letting the algorithm take me places. I don't like to pick and choose particular bands for people. Its not up to me to decide what one should listen to. However, I would always

encourage an open mind. There's lots of great music out there besides punk rock.

AU: Collaboration with your brother Rob? Will there be any in the future?

DB: Probably not. The next album will have perhaps the last one. I took an old demo of Robs and redid the music. But you never know.

AU: Were there limited Dead Bob records printed? How do people get their mitts on 'em?

DB: There was a limited number printed for these current shows, so you'll have to come out to get one. But what's left over will be made available somehow.

AU: Any new plans for Compressorhead? Any chance you'll tour with them? Maybe they could open for Dead Bob in the future?

DB: I have talked to Frank about just that and would love to figure out something overseas. Not sure if they could make it here, but I obviously would fucking love that too! That was an amazing project.

AU: Final words for our fanatical readers.

DB: Hey, the fanatics fuel this process. They create the excitement. So I'm counting on you, and we'll do our best to hold up our side of bargain. Deal?

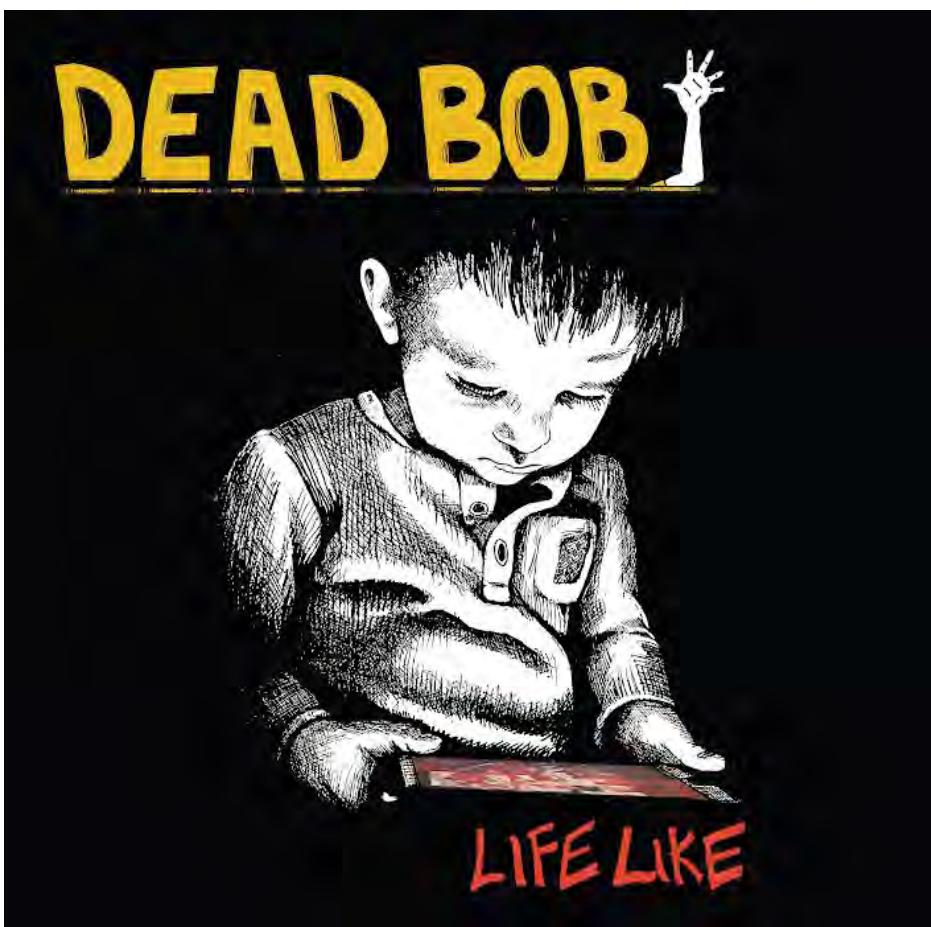
AU: How do people find Dead Bob online?

DB: IG @dead._.bob
deadbob@bandcamp.com

Or better yet join We're so Wright we're Wrong FB group and meet all you new friends.

Photo Credits: Solos & Band Photo 2: R.D. Cane ; Band Photo 1: by band

Members from left to right on 'Band Photo 2' – Colin MacRae, John Wright, Ford Pier, Kristy Lee Audette, Byron Slack





3 Inches of Blood

3 INCHES OF BLOOD

Interview with Lead Singer Cam Pipes

By Irocker Hunter, Raymond MacKay, Erik Lindholm, and Brady Tighe

The west coast warriors of heavy metal return... from a hiatus since 2015. Three back-to-back shows at the legendary Commodore Ballroom in Vancouver herald their return. Mark your calendars, for January 2024 marks the reemergence of the band which fused genres and reignited the love of classic NWOBHM for many. What is clear, as we reflect on this time period: they have learned, lived and overcome challenges – and now the music will always be played on their terms.

All the members have continued in music in their own way, forming and recording with other bands. But always that itch remained, to sharpen swords with the warriors of past battles! And now we see the storied band reunite to bring their message live to both old and new fans.

The future is unwritten; where the band's path leads is unknown to us, dear reader. These shows three, foretell of great things and in their return to form, the magic of fate will take control.

AU takes a moment to reflect on the 3IOB saga so far, and envision the future, with vocalist Cam Pipes.

Absolute Underground : Who are we talking to and what are your skills to pay the bills?

3 Inches of Blood: My name is Cam, and I'm the singer of 3 Inches of Blood.

AU: Who else is in the band?

3IOB: Myself on vocals, Ash Pearson on drums Nick Cates on bass, Shane Clark on guitar, and Justin Hagberg on guitar and vocals.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

3IOB: Heavy metal.

AU: What was your first introduction to metal?

3IOB: It came from a friend of mine that lived on my street. When I was eight years old, He would come over to my house and bring his tapes to listen to, and one day he brought over some Iron Maiden tapes, one of which being Powerslave, and I was captivated by the artwork. It's still one of my favourite albums to.

AU: Where are you from, and what's the music scene like there?

3IOB: I spent my teenage years and early 20's in Victoria. We were kind of isolated there and didn't get a lot of touring metal bands come through, but there was definitely an appetite in the local scene for it. There were some good bands growing up, unfortunately most of them weren't really known outside of the scene, but with the rise of the Internet, hopefully the ones that deserved recognition will get noticed by some people.

AU: What is the origin story of 3 Inches of Blood?

3IOB: To the best of my knowledge, the band was formed from a desire to play old school/traditional heavy metal because, at the time, new bands just weren't doing that anymore

AU: Tell us about the earliest 3 Inches of Blood live shows you can remember?

3IOB: I saw them before I joined the band, and I knew the members from going to shows in Victoria. However, it wasn't until Halloween 1999 or 2000 when I finally saw them live.

AU: 3IOB had a lot of band members over the years. Tell me about when you joined, did you feel you had arrived?

3IOB: The band was still pretty much in its infancy when I joined. We were playing gigs around Vancouver and had just released an EP. The internet was still a growing place to network your music so we grew our fan base by playing any shows we could get. It helped expose us to all sorts of fans, not just the average metal fan. The Vancouver metal scene didn't accept us right away. Probably because we didn't conform to what was popular at the time and we didn't all have long hair.

AU: What was the first 3IOB release?

3IOB: There was a five song EP that came out around 2001. It's unofficially called Sect of the White Worm. It was recorded before I joined up, but I listened to it a bunch and was asked to put vocals on it.

AU: How were you able to take NWOBHM and make it your own?

3IOB: It's what we liked, and it was fun to write songs like that. Anthemic stuff was our jam.

AU: What's the secret to a good galloping beat? I feel like the root lies in songs like UFO's "Doctor Doctor," something that Iron Maiden play on the PA every night right before going onstage. Possibly paying homage to the galloping beat's origin. Am I correct or just too stoned?

3IOB: We got a lot of Iron Maiden comparisons because of the galloping riffs, but we didn't mind because they're our idols. We wore our influences on our sleeves.

AU: Tell us about your experience playing on the big stage at Wacken Open Air in 2008?

3IOB: An incredible and life-changing moment for sure. Electrifying stuff. I was so nervous for our entire set. I mean I never calmed down. Somehow, I just rode it out and had lots of fun. We all were. It was the biggest crowd we ever played for.

AU: Who had the forethought to bring the B.C. flag to wave around onstage when you first came out?

3IOB: We wanted to emulate Bruce Dickinson and the way he waves the Union Jack during "The Trooper," but make it Canadian. Initially I was going to be a Canadian flag but one of the guys suggested we go even more regional and fly a BC flag.

AU: How did 3 Inches of Blood end up playing down at San Diego Comic-Con? Were those silver-clad go-go dancers that showed up on stage while you were playing planned or a total surprise?

3IOB: That was another show with GWAR. It was a release party for the highly underrated video game Brütal Legend. We thought the go-go dancers were going to be part of GWAR's show. When they suddenly came out on stage during our set and began dancing, we all looked at each other in confusion. We had not hired them to dance during our set. Before we even finished the song the girls looked at each other and realized they'd shown up to the wrong gig.

AU: What led to the disbanding of 3 Inches in Blood in 2015?

3IOB: Several things; We were getting burnt out on the constant touring, especially with it becoming less financially sustainable to continue at the pace we'd been at. It started as a year-long break but by the end of that year, individual priorities had changed, there was a desire for some people to pursue other opportunities outside of music, and a general sense of creative fatigue led to the decision to call it a day.

AU: Tell us about the two legendary final shows you played? I just remember a surge of palpable energy going through the crowd when original vocalist Jamie Hooper made a special appearance. The hairs stood up all over my body and the crowd was just blown away.

3IOB: We weren't going to do a final show initially, but we hadn't played in Vancouver for a few years and didn't want to go out without doing something more memorable. The first show's ticket sales did well so the promoter gave us the option to do a second show.

AU: How is Jamie doing? I assume it was tough losing the vocal tandem between Cam and Jamie? What was the reason he had to leave the band, for people who don't know what the situation was.

3IOB: The rigours of the road took its toll on Jamie's voice. That's the long and short of it. He didn't want to go on stage and give a half-assed vocal performance, so he stepped away to try and heal. Over the course of about a year it wasn't getting back to where he felt comfortable, so he decided to officially leave the band.

It was an adjustment, but Justin stepped in without hesitation to do Jamie's parts on top of playing guitar. There wasn't a lot of prep time before doing Ozzfest '07 but we had the drive to do it, so we made it work.

AU: Will Jamie possibly be making another live appearance for your upcoming back from the grave shows scheduled for Jan 12th, 13th, and 14th at the Commodore Ballroom in Vancouver?

3IOB: We asked Jamie to be a part of the reunion but for various reasons he is unable to.

Blood



AU: What led to the decision to resurrect the band?

3IOB: Justin approached me with the idea of possibly getting the band back together. He'd been feeling inspired to play heavy metal again and wanted to know my feelings about it. I had always felt open to it but didn't initiate the conversation myself. Gradually, we met up with the other guys and it didn't take much convincing. Time can change people and opinions. All of us are in much different places in our lives now both personally and professionally. I believe we are all much more mature and grounded than before. We're going to do this on our own terms. We used to tour constantly; sometimes tours we didn't necessarily want to do. We took them because that was our job. We had to keep busy to pay the bills and keep the record label satisfied that we were promoting the latest album. It was difficult for us (and our wives) to be grinding it out for months at a time for most of the year. These days we don't have to operate like that anymore. We're going to play when and where we want to.

AU: Are there hopes of keeping the metal fires burning, or is this just the three shows at the Commodore and then going into hibernation again?

3IOB: There are things brewing. You'll have to wait and see what it is.

AU: Any thoughts about a new album?

3IOB: A little too early to say if or when that could happen. We haven't ruled it out.

AU: I say go balls out and hit up the festival circuit next summer. Could something like that happen?

3IOB: That's definitely something we'd like to do. The festivals are a great time. You get to play to a lot of people you might not normally play for.

AU: Is this the second or third time the band has been on the cover of Absolute Underground? Is it still a thrill or has the lustre worn off by now?

3IOB: Clearly AU has good taste, and we appreciate the love and support. All the other mags have been too afraid to put us on the covers, but they clearly don't have the vision.



Photos by: Hristo Shindov

AU: Who's the most epic person you ever met/partied with backstage at a European Metal Fest? Did they live up to your expectations?

3IOB: I met Cronos from Venom at Download '05. Nice chap, and he took a photo with me. All the musicians are contemporaries of each other so there's rarely any fanboy moments that I've experienced.

AU: What will the lasting legacy of 3 Inches of Blood be?

3IOB: I like to think that we always stuck out like a sore thumb, in a good way, on any show or tour we were on. It helped us get noticed and made folks pay attention to our music. We have great fans and we've made music we're all proud of.

AU: The best memory you have of 3IOB on tour? Where was your most magic made?

3IOB: From a performance perspective I wouldn't be able to pick just one. Opening for Iron Maiden at Irvine Meadows in California was a bucket-list achievement for us. They're our idols. Wacken Festival 2008 was huge for us too: it's the biggest metal fest in the world and we played to 50,000 metal maniacs. Loud Park 2010 in Tokyo was likewise very special. It was our first time in Japan, and we played first to a packed arena of over 10,000 people and they went nuts. It was so surreal. There are a few examples like that over our career.

AU: Who did you unexpectedly meet on this journey that you most treasure?

3IOB: We've had the pleasure of meeting lots of incredible people along the way, not just musical heroes but just great people in the industry and great fans too. It's all been a humbling experience to be able to do what we've done

AU: If you could tell yourself something now, looking back at when you joined the band – what would you tell yourself? What advice do you have to your past self?

3IOB: Obviously there's a lot of things we would have done differently. I can't change any of it now but probably wouldn't change much anyways. It's pointless to dwell on mistakes and regrets.

AU: Does anyone in the band read comic books? If so, which ones?

3IOB: I'm sure we all read comic books when we were younger. We got mentioned in The Punisher: Dark Reign, issue #5 in 2009. The Punisher uses our music to take down a bad guy. It was really cool.

AU: What's the strangest hobby you've turned to in recent years?

3IOB: Being a responsible adult.

AU: If you could hire anyone to do your album art, living or dead, who would you choose?

3IOB: Frank Frazetta 1000%. He is the master of fantasy art. Absolutely unrivalled in his craft.

AU: If the Console Wars started today, which side would you join?

3IOB: I've always been a PlayStation guy. That probably started with PS3 having a Blu-ray player and God of War. Whenever Elder Scrolls 6 comes out we'll see where my loyalties lie.

AU: What's the best thing that happened to you all year?

3IOB: My lovely wife tolerated me for another year so I'm pretty stoked about that.

AU: Best X-Mas present you ever got when you were a kid.

3IOB: I must've been around 10 years old when I came downstairs Christmas morning and there was the G.I. Joe headquarters already assembled for me to play with along with some action figures of various types. It was the most surprised I've ever been on Christmas morning.

AU: What's the worst Holiday experience you can remember?

3IOB: There was a blizzard in Vancouver one year, and I was trying to get back home to Victoria to see family, but it was impossible to get anywhere. The silver lining is my wife and I had recently rescued a dog, so it was nice to have time to bond with our newest family member.

AU: Do you prefer Santa Claus or Krampus? Why?

3IOB: They are the antithesis of each other, both serve their purpose, but on opposite sides of the spectrum. It's like good and evil, no matter your preference there must always be balance.

AU: Best Christmas movie of all time?

3IOB: A Christmas Story. I've been watching that movie since I was a kid and it's a tradition to this day for my wife and I to watch it while we're having dinner on Christmas Day.

AU: Big plans for New Years?

3IOB: We're going to kick it off with our reunion gigs then see what happens from there.

AU: Who's taking the Stanley Cup out on a parade next year?

3IOB: We shall see, won't we? I expect the Canucks will break my heart again though.

AU: Anything else to promote?

3IOB: The big thing to mention is we're playing three shows at the Commodore ballroom in Vancouver on January 12th, 13th, and 14th. Can't wait to see you there.

AU: Final words for readers?

3IOB: Gotta play it louder, all men play on ten, If you don't like heavy metal, you are not my friend.

AU: How do people find you online?

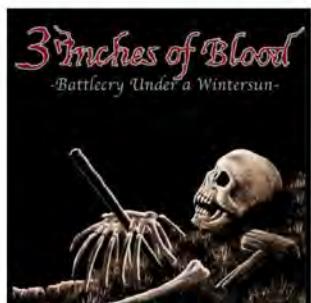
3IOB: Instagram -@3iob.

All relevant links found in bio there.



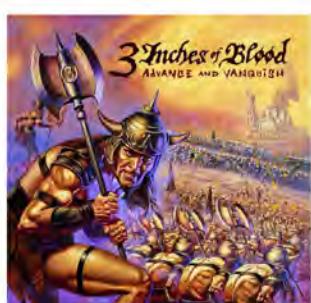
3 Inches of Blood

CAM PIPES BREAKS DOWN THE DISCOGRAPHY OF THE LEGENDARY BAND



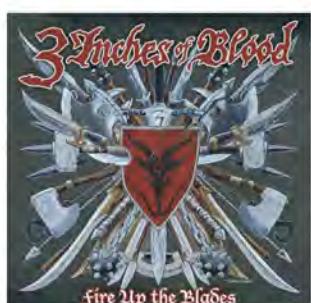
Battlecry Under a Wintersun (2002)

"This was our first full length. It was recorded over the span of several months whenever we were able to get recording time. The feel of the album is pretty raw, but there's an enthusiastic metal spirit on here. It also produced "Destroy the Orcs," which was to become a staple in our set."



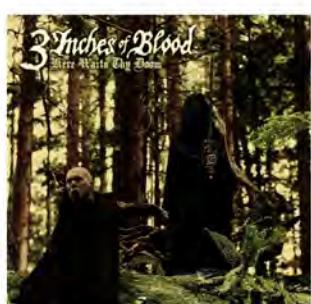
Advance and Vanquish (2004)

"Our first album on a bonafide record label, Roadrunner Records. It was a tumultuous time when it was recorded. Our drummer and bassist both quit the band during pre-production, and then both guitarists left after it was finished. A whirlwind touring schedule followed. Many fans consider this one of our best albums and why not? It's chock full of killer songs. We'd definitely matured as songwriters."



Fire Up the Blades (2007)

"Our last album with Roadrunner, produced by the late Joey Jordison. We were recording with new members for the first time. A different feel, and noticeably more driving and aggressive than the last one, but the band's spirit is still very much there. Another fan favourite album. Tons of songs we're very proud of."



Here Waits Thy Doom (2009)

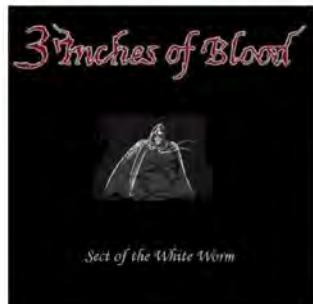
"First album with a new label, Century Media. Produced by the legend Jack Endino. New drummer Ash Pearson's first recording with us. Feeling like the last two albums had a bit too much polish and studio tricks, we made a conscious decision to strip down the production a bit and rely on the riffs to do the rocking. This one's a bit of a polarizing record. Some fans didn't like it as much but at the same time we have a bunch of fans who love it."



Long Live Heavy Metal (2012)

"Personally I think this is our best overall album as songwriters. There's peaks and valleys on here and we really tried to take the listener on a journey. We worked hard with co-producer Terry Sho Murray to make this a killer record."

CAM PIPES UP ABOUT THE EPs



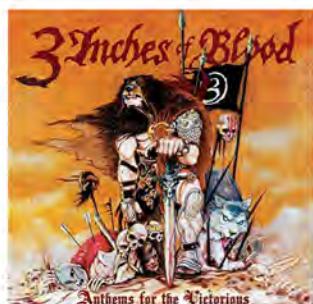
Sect of the White Worm (2001)

"Basically, our demo. I joined the band shortly after this was recorded. I added my vocals to it before it was released. Real meat and potatoes galloping heavy metal, totally raw and old school."



Trial of Champions (2007)

"This was a way for us release a couple of the bonus tracks we recorded for Fire Up the Blades with one of them being a cover of a Lucifer's Friend song."



Anthems for the Victorious (2011)

"We wrote a couple of songs between tours and recorded them along with a Rush cover, the latter of which was used in a movie, called Lloyd the Conqueror, starring comedian, Brian Posehn."

3 Inches of Blood

BAND MEMBER FAMILY TREE

Justin Hagberg
(Guitar and Vocals)

Allfather, Ritual Dictates, Toxic Holocaust (live musician only), Xanadudes (Rush cover band)

Shane Clark
(Guitar)

Human Resistance Program, Ten Miles Wide, The Almighty Punchdrunk, Worse, Elsinore, Xanadudes

Ash Pearson
(Drums)

Angel Grinder, Sound of the Swarm, Just Cause, Zimmers Hole, Revocation, Xanadudes

Cam Pipes
(Vocals)

Allfather, Black Vein Prophecy, Taken By Force (Scorpions cover band), Xanadudes

Nick Cates
(Bass)

Kane Hodder, Curse of the North, The Godbeast

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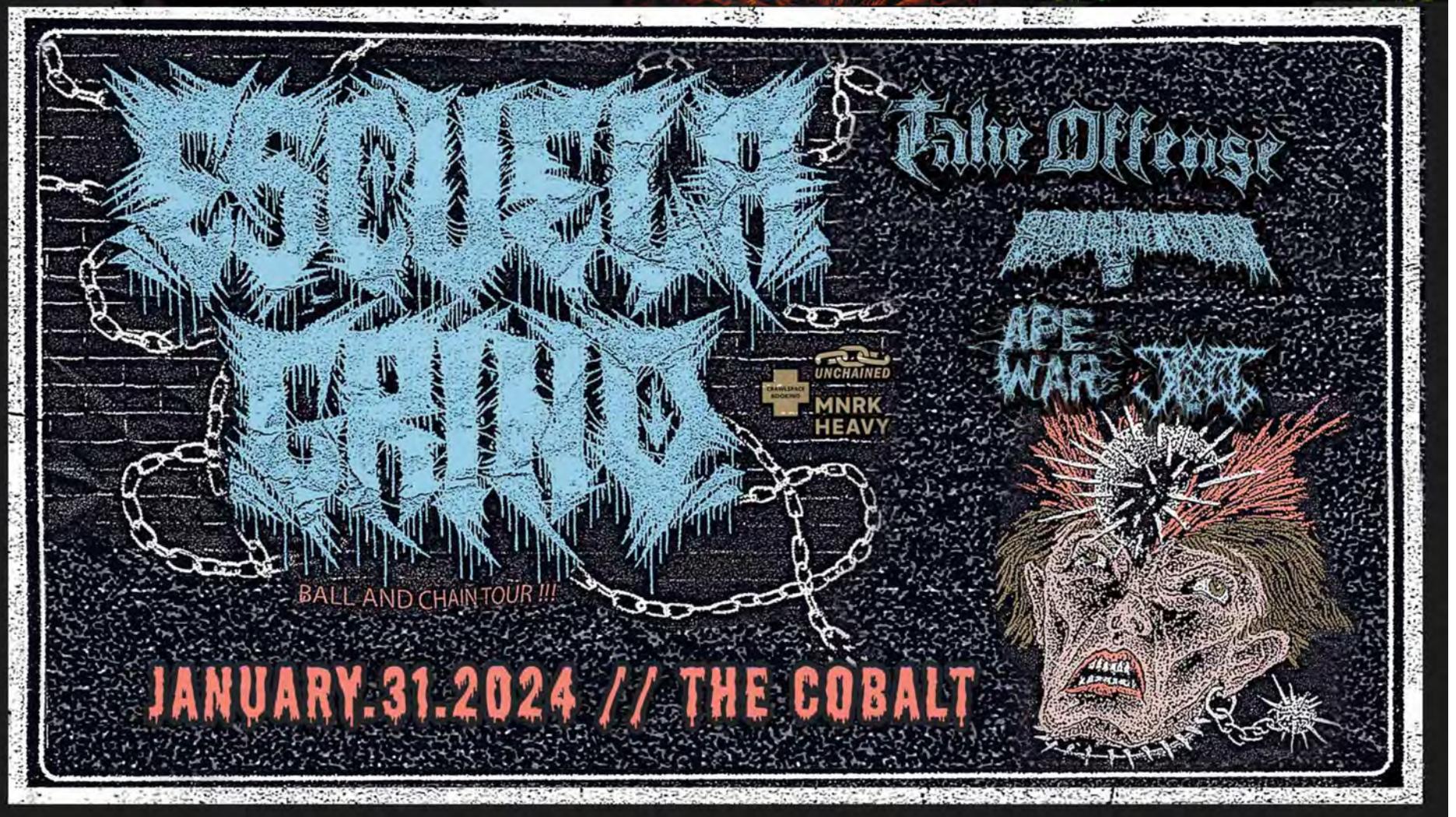
MAR.17.2023 //

North American
Tour
SUN.SEP.17.2023 // THE COBALT

SAT.SEP.23.2023

BILTMORE CABARET

SEPT.26.2023 // RICKSHAW THEATRE





ART

Popular Culture: Your Art Is Showing

Nov 2023-March 2024

164 2nd Ave W – Qualicum Beach,
B.C.

**Interview with Pop Cult Museum
Curator and Skull Skates founder PD**

By Ira "Hammerhead" Hunter

AU: Tell us about the art show you have going on right now. Is it filling the space of your Pop Cult Museum in Qualicum Beach?

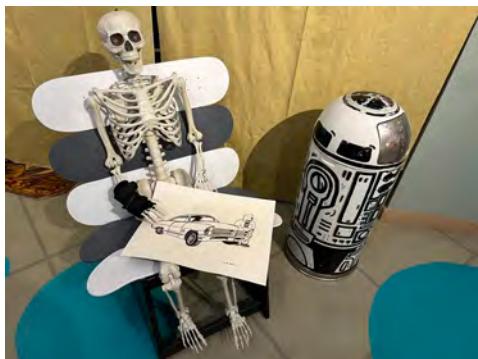
PD: Yeah, that's exactly right. We completed the Vintage Snowboard show, the Vintage Bike show, and now we're on to Art. Our plan is to do a couple of exhibits a year.

AU: Does it feature just one artist? Or is it a collaboration?

PD: It's several artists. Essentially it is the Skull Skates Art Collection. As a pretty solid appreciator of art I've managed to collect a fair amount of pieces. Also, I've just been fortunate to know a lot of creative people.

AU: Is this art that would have been used as skateboard graphics?

PD: Some but not much of it. One section is The Mutant tho. The Mutant is a character that appeared originally on these 1980s asymmetrically shaped Skull Skates



Boards. It kind of looks like just a line drawing of a ghost kind of guy.

AU: What other artists are featured?

PD: There's several, like four or five, nice Chi Pig pieces. But they're earlier pieces from the 90s. I think most people know Chi for his later works, where it was kind of smaller pieces. It's great stuff, all of it actually, but a little bit more fastly executed stuff. Whereas some of these earlier ones he put a bit more time into them. There's a section for my buddy, the artist called Boy. He's no longer around. But he was a real iconic guy in Vancouver. He had a similar story to Chi, even though he didn't have any connection to punk rock. But he was just a creative guy who sort of lived this final years in the Downtown Eastside and became quite a figure down there.

AU: Do you have people like I, Braineater?

PD: I do have Braineater pieces in my collection but I don't have any in the exhibit. You've got to understand my collection is fucking insane. I would say a third of the collection is maybe in this first exhibit.

AU: What was your first exposure to art?

PD: I've been collecting for about 40 years. I think my first exposure to art was probably through punk rock and skateboarding.



It's funny when we said we were going to have the show, the first question a lot of people ask, which I admire you for not asking it is, what kind of art is it? I think that as humans, we love to put things in little boxes. But I'm reluctant to use terms like lowbrow and street art, because I



think they're too narrow and they are somehow a little bit demeaning as well. So as an example, I have pieces in the exhibit that maybe would be considered lowbrow or street art by some people. But then knowing that I was doing this exhibit. I

STEVE RICARDO

YOUTUBE INFLUENCER



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DIRTY AUDIO MACHINE



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"Pantera meets Static X"....El Metal Bravo



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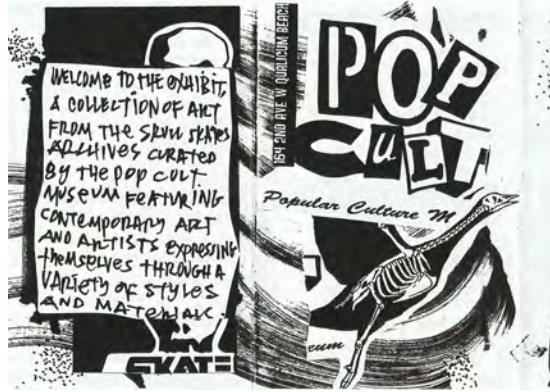
collected a bunch of art books on the old masters. Renoir, Degas and Matisse and so all of that stuff is in there too just laying around. If people want to come in and hang out, look at some art on the walls and then look at some work of the masters it's all together. I wanted to make an attempt to remove any of those barriers between one style and the next and present it all as art. So rather than trying to label it, just put it out there and let people enjoy and interpret it on their own.

AU: What is the name of this exhibit?

PD: It's called Art and then the subtext is Popular Culture Your Art Is Showing. It's actually a knockoff from an old Chi Pig art show that we had done with him years ago. He put on the poster, Mr. Chi pig your art is showing, which I thought was pretty clever. You know how Chi was with words, he was a real word-smith.

AU: He also had that song called "I Think Fine Arts Fine".

PD: Yeah, that's right. Chi was an interesting cat,



art has that power and Chi understood that. So I think there's something kind of special about that.

AU: How long is this show scheduled to run?

PD: This show stays up until the middle of March. It's been cool, because you know, Qualicum Beach is a little town, we weren't sure about it. But it turns out there's a lot of people that are really into art in this town. I would say that, not to generalize, but it's more that kind of traditional sort of art landscapes and so forth. But because there are a lot of creative people, the response has been really awesome.

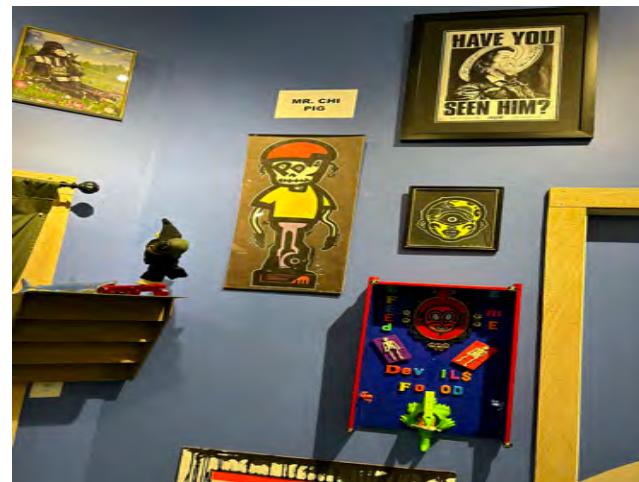
AU: Are you going to be selling any of your pieces? Or are there art prints available?

PD: Not really, but my sweetheart, Rachel, she's actually put a few pieces in the show that are for sale. They're pieces that she's done of little icons around Qualicum Beach, but she's given them her own kind of twist. So it'll be kind of like a little scenery that's sort of abstract and has sort of hot pink and fluorescent orange

colours. It's really interesting stuff. But primarily, it's just our collection on display. I think of it less of a commercial gallery setting and more like a museum. Which is what we're trying to do with this pop culture thing, where essentially I've collected all this crap and the idea is to share it with people.

AU: How was the art show opening?

PD: The opening was fun. In a couple hours we had about 120 people come through. Really well attended. My favourite events are when you look around and go Whoa, these people don't all really seem like they belong together in one place. But here they are. So that was great because we



AU: What other exhibits and art shows are planned for the future?

PD: We're amassed an incredible amount of stuff and art is one of them. So basically Art is the third installation. But we have so much stuff to go through. I mean, I haven't even gotten to skateboards, which is the biggest part of the collection.

The skateboard collection could be several shows. Then the toy collection is just insane. Lots of vintage Star Wars from the 70s and 80s. A ton of vintage Japanese robots. Just weird household objects. I don't know if you know anybody who's into collecting stuff, but if

you're really addicted to it like I am, you can end up going in all kinds of different directions. What I decided at a certain point was if I don't share it, I'm just a hoarder. If I share it, I'm a curator and curator sounds a lot more fancy. I'm joking, but it's been a joy to share the stuff because people genuinely enjoy it.

AU: Any final words about this art show and why people should check it out?

PD: People should check it out because art is an amazing thing to have in your life and I think that it's inspiring. It's all kind of the same... I look at music, skateboarding, snowboarding and riding a bicycle and all of it as you're just tapping the flow of the universe and trying to create within it. Those are all vehicles that allow you to do it. So that's why we're trying to keep everything as open ended as possible.

We're just putting it out there and letting people experience it in their own way.

skullskates.com
Photo Credit: Rachel Hayward



the pieces that are on exhibit, it would be hard to describe it over the phone without seeing the stuff. But I made this little sort of zine-like booklet that goes with the show that says a little bit about the artists and their work. The thing I think I mentioned about Chi is that, he had this sort of I'd almost call it a fetish, at least in his earlier works that I have to kind of agitate through art. You know, what I mean? Which of course, he did with his performance. The way he wrote songs and way he delivered them to the audience happened in a lot of different ways. But one of the components that showed up a lot was just sort of agitating people. Getting under their skin a little bit and you see that in these pieces. I just think that

guitar. So that was really cool. We have another event coming up on the 23rd. All the shops stay open late here in town and it's a pretty busy. So we're trying to nail down some kind of live entertainment for the gallery for that one.

AU: Was there a Skull Skates record label at some point?

PD: Yeah, Skull Skates Recordings. We only did two records and we found that the record industry is a really good way to fucking piss away a lot of money. But yeah, it was fun experiment. One is an LP for Sorcerers and the other was a single for The Bonitos.

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WORDBURGLAR

Burgonomics

Issue # 2

Interview by Raymond MacKay

Part #1 of this interview is in the previous issue of Absolute Underground. Available online

AU: Describe some of the songs and themes of each album.

WB: Let's see.

BURGLARITIS (2006) I guess I consider Burglaritis my first "official album". It was the album I'd been waiting a lifetime to make - the culmination of teenage years thinking about what my first, "real" rap album would be like. It featured 20 tracks of me basically exploding on the mic in a variety of different styles from chilled and laid-back to absolutely over the top ridiculous. I was really proud of my first "storytelling" track, "The Route" which was about my adventures on my paper route as a kid, where I made money to buy rap albums and comic books and once saw a dead body in an apartment. "Cream Of Wheat" is another song I was super proud of, and I recorded it the morning I'd been up all night after breaking up with my girlfriend at the time. I can hear it in my voice when I listen to it to this day, and I think that gave it a weight that seemed to connect with people. The video got played on MuchMusic more than anything I ever released, and we got featured on The Wedge which at the time was a pretty big deal for me. The whole album is pretty crazy but when compared to what else was coming out at the time in retrospect I think it fits in really well and I achieved a lot of what I set out to do. I had a lot to prove to people and was still developing my voice and writing style but I'm very proud of what we did, and even though the humour is pretty raw at times I think it helped make the record stand on its own.

BURGIE'S BASEMENT (2009) I had been working on a follow-up to Burglaritis forever, but the pressures of paying bills as a young indie Canadian rapper with no label money was spreading me pretty thin. Even though Burglaritis was available at HMV's and record stores across North America that didn't translate into any cash as the industry was really suffering and shifting more digital by the day. We didn't have easy access to get on digital sites either, it was crazy hard to get on iTunes back then unless you had a bunch of label support and even then there'd be like 3 levels of organizations taking money from your label before it even got to you. Despite these frustrations I was having the time of my life, playing tons of local shows, working at a comic shop and taking random acting gigs while trying to tour as much as possible and next thing I knew it had been 3 years since I'd had a release. So I gathered up the best songs I had at that point - some intended for my studio album, some random remixes, some strange b-sides that I always liked but didn't know what to do with, and BAM! I put out Burgie's Basement, B-sides, remixes and rarities. I burned 500 CDs for my 2009 Summer Tour, sold out and then Toronto label URBNET released the album the following winter. I think there's some really good stuff on it, but not one of my greatest albums.

3RDBURGLAR (2012) Coincidentally it took me 3 more years of doing tons of recording, performing

and touring, as well as some group albums, before I released my next solo album, 3RDBURGLAR. This album holds the title for the most videos of songs featured on the album - and I'm very proud of those. Croque Monsieur, Rhyme O'Clock and Drawings With Words are all super-fun videos that I highly suggest watching if you haven't, and during the pandemic I released a video for "Your Friend's Brother" which to this day is my most requested song when I play live. I think this album is pivotal in my career as I really stretched out and felt comfortable going deeper into my nerdy passions. I doubled down on rapping about stuff I love on this one, no matter how obscure, and had an incredible time recording it. I also think this album features a great variety of classic original rap songs, humour, nerdity, obscurity and reality. From sandwiches and crazy wordplay to comics, star wars, GI-JOE, nostalgia and breakups, I think my writing chops really went up a notch on this record. "Point Of Departure" might be one of the best songs I ever wrote. I cracked a lot of codes making this one and we're in the process of pressing it on wax, so it's fresh in my ears and hopefully when the vinyl drops a whole new bunch of listeners can find it.

WELCOME TO COBRA ISLAND (2013) I made an entire album inspired by my love of G.I. Joe, mainly the comics written by Larry Hama, and I was determined to make it not suck by all means possible. I'm very proud of this one and I think even if you don't know anything about G.I. Joe it's pretty fresh. The idea started as just one song about the character Snake Eyes, but I realized quickly that his story needed 3 songs, and then I wanted to rap about the bad guys, and next thing I knew I had 12 songs produced by some of the best beat-makers I know.

RAPPICABLE SKILLS (2015) Since Cobra Island was a concept album based on one concept, I wanted to go back to doing a traditional "mix" album, where every song was its own concept and had a very distinct place on the record. Essentially, Rappicable Skills is a collection of very conceptual songs that I think all play really well together. I draw on a lot of childhood memories and experiences here. I cover the legend of Bill Mosienko, the hockey player with the fastest hat trick in NHL History (21 seconds!) who my dad always used as a metaphor for "never giving up", I had a ton of fun rapping about my Nintendo Power Hi-Score for the video game NARC, and rapping about the "Other Shop" the worst comic shop in Everytown, USA. The biggest single on this record is chill little ode to my hometown "Channel Halifax" which I don't think I could have written had I never left Halifax and then looked back on all the reasons why I love it so much. We shot a video for Channel Halifax over 4 seasons in Hali, and it was an incredible experience. Looking back at the video is pretty cool, and kind of sad as a lot of the places featured in it have been torn down now.

RHYME YOUR BUSINESS (2018) This is a very memorable album for me personally as it was the record I went on my most ambitious tour ever with and played cities I'd never been to before. From Newfoundland to BC I played coast to coast across Canada, did a bunch of shows in the US from Texas to Tennessee, Ohio, New York...and then Japan and back again. The lead off single "Rental Patient" produced by my longtime friend and musical genius Beatmason is about the bygone era of renting movies was featured in the movie "The Last Blockbuster" and honestly I just think is darn good song. This album is kind of a companion piece to 2015's Rappicable Skills, I see them as cousins, and they play well back to back or mixed up together. I think the title track has some of my favourite rapping on it and there are some very strange and geeky deep cuts buried in here for movie, comic and video game nerds. We did a rearranged release of this for vinyl called "The MacGuffin Device" because this whole album is too big to fit on vinyl and because we had an insane video for "The MacGuffin Device" in the works, that finally came out in 2023!!! Good things take time like a watch-re-possessor haha.

SPACEVERSE (2019) Back to concept albums with this one! This time combining my love of all things spacey and sci-fi with some killer tracks about Star Wars, Star Trek, Dr. Who, Robotech, Visionaries and Transformers (one featuring Hot Rod from the Cybertronic Spree even!). I love this album and the cover art by my pal Danny Zabbal is perfect.

BURGONOMIC (2022) I think this is my best

full-length album. I worked with 11 different beat-makers on Burgonomic to deliver a really banging, diverse collection of songs and concepts, all recorded during the pandemic. I was thrilled to get to work with Buck 65 and Moka Only, artists I've looked up to in the Canadian rap world forever, and to reunite with Jorun Bombay who I think is Canada's best kept hip-hop secret. Of course working with my longtime friends and collaborators Beatmason, Fresh Kils, Timbuktu, More Or Less, Savillion, Diagnostik80, Milk Plus, Peter Project, Touch182, Jesse Dangerously, Irn Mnky, DJ Irate, Bnutz and the whole Backburner Crew is always a blast and the cover art by Marvel Comics' artist Kalman Andrasofsky is bananas. I also really wanted to make a CD booklet for this one and we went all out with 28 pages of lyrics and art that comes with the CD. Move over Pearl Jam! CDs are back!

AU: Any plans to release another album/song in the near future?

WB: Always! THE SPINNER RACK EP featuring a crazy video for 1980 FORCE should be out by the time this goes to print and after that I've got some really fun projects in the works including a sequel to Cobra Island and a comic book! Please stay tuned.

AU: You have many unique and entertaining songs - where do you get inspiration for your songs from?

WB: Mostly from Earth. But sometimes from the 4th Dimension.

AU: What drew you to a career in music? Any career highlights or lowlights to share.

WB: Love of music, love of listening, love of sharing. Love of having fun and making people have fun too. It's not a career, it's just something I love doing and will never stop.

AU: What comic books are you currently reading? What are your favorite comics of all time?

WB: I've been reading comics nonstop since I was a kid, no hyperbole. Currently reading or flipping through Tom Scioli's Jack Kirby Biography, the Gargoyles comic based on the cartoon and finally getting to Murder Falcon. I have a never-ending pile of unread comics calling me and there's a lot of gold in there right now. There's a new Dan

Clowes book on the way I'm very excited about too and Noah Van Sciver is making some excellent comics these days. My faves of all time? Sweet Tooth and most everything Jeff Lemire does, Watchmen, Eltingville by Evan Dorkin, Jupiter by Jason Sandberg, everything by Dan Clowes, everything by Ed Brubaker, everything by George Perez, Saga, 100 Bullets, Amazing Spider-Man, Savage Dragon, Invincible and of course G.I. Joe by Larry Hama.

AU: What is your favourite fast food place and what is your favourite item on their menu?

WB: Tony's Donair in Halifax and my favourite item is the large Donair.

AU: If you could hire anyone to do your album art, who would you pick?

WB: My best friend Dave Howlett, who luckily for me I get to work with all the time!

AU: What's your dream tour line-up to share the stage with?

WB: Method Man & Redman, DJ Prince Paul and Kool Keith.

AU: Anything else to promote?

WB: In addition to my new EP and 1980 FORCE music video which, I have a podcast called "Do You Still Like This Movie?" where a guest and I see if we still like a movie we used to like. It's a ton of fun and free to listen to however you hear podcasts. I've had some great guests and it's coming back for a new season next year. Check it out!

AU: Any final words for our readers? Hit us with a freestyle.

WB: If it rhymes, real!

AU: How do people find you online?

WB: Wordburglar dot com and Wordburglar on all platforms. My YouTube channel has a lot of fun stuff on it you might like too.



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THE CONVALESCENCE

Harvesters of Flesh and Bone

Interview with Vocalist Keith Wampler

AU: You were up here in Canada this past Summer, how was the touring and playing Loud As Hell Festival with Jungle Rot and Narcotic Wasteland?

The Convalescence: Touring Canada is always an absolute blast and the Loud As Hell Festival was incredible. One of the highlights of our year for sure. We have been friends with the Jungle Rot guys for a little while now and it's always awesome to share the stage with them. We played on a different day than Narcotic Wasteland did at the fest but they did stick around on their day off to see our set and even showed up in Regina, SK the following day to hang out at our show. We had the pleasure of sharing the stage with them in Boise, ID earlier in the tour and they are a great

band everyone should check out.

AU: You have a new album entitled Harvesters of Flesh and Bone out on Cleopatra Records. What can you tell us about this record?

TC: This album has been years in the making but in our opinion well worth the wait. We believe this to be our heaviest and best album so far.

AU: You have Scott Ian Lewis (Carnifex) and Ricky Myers (Suffocation) as album guests, how was it collaborating with them?



TC: Scott and Ricky both crushed their performances on the album. Ricky is a long-time friend as he was in Disgorge in 2015 when we toured with them in the U.S. and was the vocalist for Suffocation on our first European Tour with them in 2016. We actually wanted to get him on a track a few albums ago but the timing just hadn't worked out until now and we're very happy that it did. We've all been jamming Carnifex since we were teenagers, and have been sharing the stage with those dudes for years since, so it was an absolute honor to have Scott on a track with us. Especially since it's potentially the heaviest track on the record. We really appreciate them both being a part of this.

AU: We absolutely loved the claymation music video you did for your track No Survivors ft. Scott Ian Lewis of Carnifex, how did the idea of going claymation come to be?

TC: I actually started talking to Shayne when I was managing Casket Robbery; We wanted a unique video style for their track "Bone Mother" and he seemed really excited about the idea and did excellent work with them. We kept in touch and he was very excited to work on "No Survivors" for us being a huge fan of the Alien Movies so it just sort of came together. Probably

to this day my favorite music video we have.

AU: How was it working with producer Jason Suecof (The Black Dahlia Murder, Carnifex, Decide, Job For A Cowboy) to bring this record alive?

TC: Jason is awesome. We had never worked with him before this album but looking at what he's done in the past and seeing that he's had a hand in most of the albums we've loved since like 2003 it was a no-brainer to work with him. The guy is a genius when it comes to metal music and I believe after working with him we all left that studio as better musicians.

AU: You're described as horror deathcore, what is it about the horror that draws you to write about it?

TC: We're all big fans of horror movies and love to put on a theatrical show that makes people say "What the fuck?" you know? So yeah, we write songs about zombies, serial killers, monsters, and gore and then bring that to the live show by spraying the crowd with fake blood and even throwing organs to people from a medical cart on stage.

AU: This is the Xmas issue of AU Magazine and Santa is known for being a jolly guy. However, If he was a fictional horror character, and his mission was to scare not bring cheer, what do you think would be a great new name to give him?

TC: That's a tough one, I'll have to think about that but doesn't that already basically exist as Krampus?

AU: Will you be returning for tour dates in Canada, what's does the band have planned for 2024?

TC: We hope so, Right now the only tour we have announced for 2024 is in January we will be doing a tour in Japan with Obituary and Karras. I'm sure we'll be back to Canada soon, As I said we love it up there!

AU: Is there anything else you would like to add for our readers?

TC: I would just like to thank everyone for supporting us and supporting Underground Metal and allowing us to continue to do this with our lives.





ELISAPIE

Inuktitut

Interview by Brady Tighe

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today and what do you do?

E: Elisapie, Inuk singer songwriter.

AU: How did you get into music?

E: I've just always been singing as a kid. So, I just kept singing. It's just something we do, not really a title that's important but a calling that helps me feel balanced.

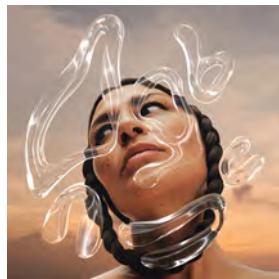
AU: What was the local music scene like where you grew up?

E: My uncles were in a famous rock band in the North in the 60's, fresh out of residential school in Churchill, Manitoba, where they sent all the Inuit. There they were exposed to a lot of rock 'n' roll. I had them to look up to for sure, my uncles and my whole family were very musical.

AU: Have you been in any other bands over the years?

E: I eventually got asked by my uncles to be their back up singer at 15.

AU: You recently released an album, how did that come about?



E: It's been a while since I've wanted to make an Inuktitut album and translate songs that moved me and my family. The songs on this album tell a story, as if they were a short documentary of life in the North during a time when important changes happened. It's like a Polaroid of the North during my childhood.

AU: The conversion of the songs to a different language and completely different instrumentation clearly elevates this

beyond a "covers album." Did you ever worry about it being seen as such while making it?

E: Yes, that is why it took me a while to figure out a way to really tell the story, something that feels personal, so that is why it took a lot of digging into my own emotions and allowing myself to go to vulnerable places, of memories that became alive as the project went on. It really wasn't about making a cover album, it became a healing journey.

AU: Do you feel that with a song like "The Unforgiven," that the heaviness of the song remains even when the instrumentation is less full-tilt metal?

E: Yes, I think it shows how both this song and Metallica are so great, that they wrote a song that even elders back home can relate to. Also, the storytelling and the melody are great.

AU: What was it like to interview Metallica at 15?

E: I can't really remember what Kirk Hammett said, I was so nervous, my English was so bad. I still think it was like a dream.



AU: What are some of your favorite Metallica songs?

E: Enter Sandman, One, Battery

AU: Have you heard any feedback from any of the artists whose songs you've covered?

E: Yes, Debbie Harry from Blondie wrote me the sweetest email, and Metallica shared the song on their Instagram, and Lars also did on his personal one!

AU: What advice would you give to emerging artists?

E: It's not easy emerging, so take the time to do something meaningful, and thrive. Inspiration is everywhere and it's free! Beauty is not made out of a beautiful perfect flower.

AU: Any tours or shows to report?

E: Yes, I'll be in L.A. in October, France in November and Toronto, and Ottawa shows in the spring.

elisapie.com

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OUTHOUSE PRODUCTIONS AND RECORDS

Interview with Label Founder Laurie Storrie

By Brady Tighe

AU: Who are we talking to today?

LS: My name is Laurie Storrie, I'm a queer musician, comedic writer, and I run Outhouse Productions and Records. I'm also going to be a new editorial journalist for Absolute Underground!

AU: What prompted you to found Outhouse Productions and Records?

LS: At the very core of it, a love for music and a desire to bring people together. I've spent most of the last 15 years casually booking shows and managing friends bands, and at some point last year I just looked at the tools and network I had built up and realized I had all the



AU: How many bands are on the label?

LS: At the time of writing this 6: Mean Bikini,

parts for a great label
AU: Since founding, what do you think has been your biggest accomplishment?
LS: I feel like I should say Outhouse Fest because of how big of a production it is, but honestly I think the magic is in the little things: I feel the greatest sense of reward whenever someone says, "I really love this band and I never would have discovered them without you"

AU: You have your own radio show as well?

LS: Yeah! I was about to go on a huge tour right when the pandemic started, over 70 shows circumnavigating North America. We had to cancel the entire thing a week before it started which left a pretty big hole in my musical life. I started an internet radio show in my bedroom as a way to stay connected to the community. I had no idea it would turn into what it is, but I've been doing live shows (almost) every Tuesday for almost four years.

AU: What kind of music is on the label?

LS: It's a punk label for sure, but while lots of other labels try and corner off a specific sub-genre or sound, Outhouse focuses heavily on good music and strong messages. Celtic punk against misogyny? We got it. Queer pop thrash? Let's go.

Pilsgnar, and The Grinning Barretts from coastal BC, Harsh From Calgary, Maverick from Montreal, and They Call it Chaos from Niagara Ontario

AU: What's the hardest part of running your own record label?

LS: Staying relevant in the digital and streaming era. There are so many DIY resources out there, labels really need to be creative and adaptable in order to offer bands something that they cannot already do on their own.

AU: What are some of your more recent releases?

LS: We recently released Grinning Barretts Bottle Hymns on vinyl, as well as a Mean Bikini's Calculated Risks on tape, which was our first release entirely recorded and mixed in our own studio.

AU: Can you pick some favourite albums that you've put out?

LS: "You never asked for this" by Pilsgnar is my personal favorite; it starts with an anti fascist banger, and then in 6 tracks explores both personal and political topics while showcasing the many different musical influences of the band.

AU: How does one get on the label?

LS: Get a hold of us online and let's see what we can do! Bonus points for Queer, Feminist, or Anti-Colonial bands.

AU: It's the final issue of the year here at Absolute Underground, what are your favourite things of the year?

LS: I've been to over 50 shows this year and I can't believe how many great bands and amazing people I've got to connect with. We're really lucky to have the scene that we do right now, in Western Canada especially.

AU: What can you tell us about Outhouse Fest?

LS: 300 people camping for 2 days. 20 bands in



an airplane hangar on a decommissioned small aircraft field on Pender Island. Honestly, putting it on is a dream come true.

AU: Anything else to promote?

LS: We've got a ton of new releases in the new year, so keep your eyes out for the Outhouse Records editorial in upcoming issues of Absolute Underground.

AU: How do people find you online?

LS: Search Outhouse records on instagram and bandcamp, or email us directly at outhousepr@gmail.com.



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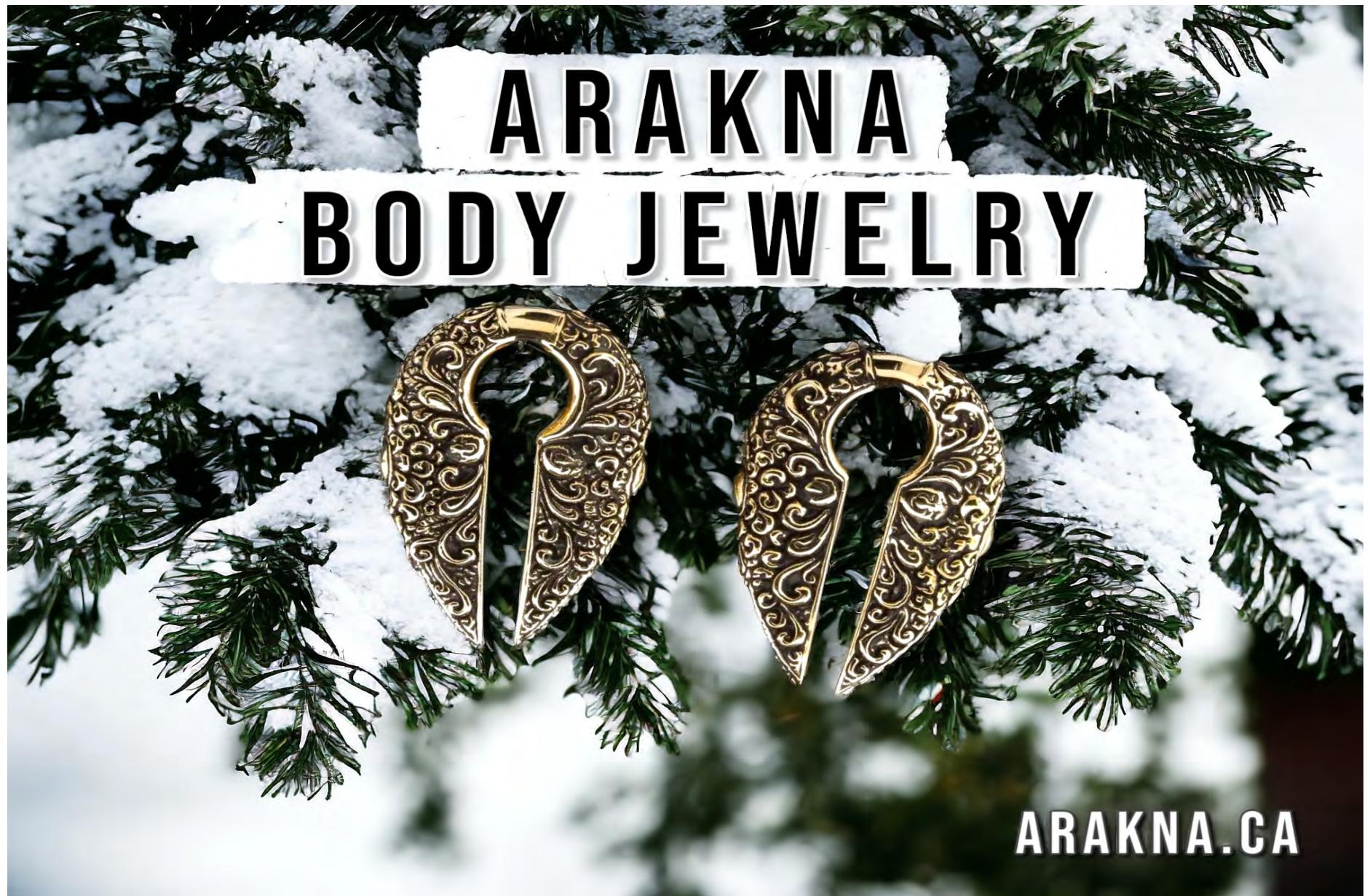
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SYRUP MOOSE RECORDS

1 Year Anniversary Celebration

Interview with founder Brendan Barlow

By Brady Tighe

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today?

Syrup Moose: My name is Brendan, the Great and Sticky Moose (he/him/they/them), I live on the unceded territory of the Gitxsan people, and in 2022 I started the anti-fascist record label, Syrup Moose Records.

AU: What prompted you to found Syrup Moose Records?

SM: Honestly, the whole thing started as a joke. I started writing for the indie metal site NoobHeavy, where I did a lot of learning about the problems with fascist assholes in metal. One day I posted a metal logo with a smattering of Canadian words on the discord channel, . About

ten minutes after I posted it, someone said they wanted to do a release, and then things just spiraled from there.

AU: You're celebrating the one-year anniversary of the label, how has the first year been?

SM: We hit one year in September, and I am still flabbergasted by the response to all of the releases and to the positive values of the label. I think it's been a year of trying to come to terms with the fact that this is, actually, not a joke and might be a real thing.

AU: What kind of music is on the label?

SM: It's primarily a metal label, but that's not necessarily by design. I think just being born out of a metal community has eased it towards that, but we've also released some emo, some post punk, electronic. We actually just released a straight up 80's synth pop record a few weeks ago.

AU: How many bands are on Syrup Moose?

SM: There are 55 bands currently on the label. Some of those are through splits, but that many have done at least one release with me. I don't hold anyone to any kind of exclusive agreement, so they're considered (to me) ON the label until they tell me they're not. I've also got around 10 or more bands coming on board, and folks doing additional releases which is very exciting.



AU: What's the hardest part of running your own record label?

SM: Honestly it's finding the time to run it, I have to work a full time job and have all the other fun adult responsibilities so to create a balance is really hard, and to feel like I'm dropping the ball when maybe I am or not. I think the lack of time and the major imposter syndrome / mood disorder kind of creates the challenge in and of themselves. Also the fact that we're in a recession and people aren't exactly burdened with excess cash to throw at cassettes.

AU: What are some of your more recent releases?

SM: We're chatting on November 20th, so most recently we've put out an epic-metal record called All of the Stars are Dead by Harbinger of Storms, a synthpunk album called Grim Beat Manifesto by Flagburner, an 80's synth album called Your Ancestors Knew Death... In Ways You Never Will. I've also just today put a black metal split up for pre-order from Skvm and Wyrmoon. It's all over the map.

AU: Can you pick some favourite albums that you've put out?

SM: It's such an embarrassment of riches when it comes to the releases I've been able to be a part of. Project: Roenwolfe and Youth Pastor jump to mind, but honestly it's an impossible choice between some truly exceptional artists.

AU: How does one get on the label?

SM: It's really not that hard. I ask folks and cross all my fingers and toes hoping they'll jump on board, but also people can usually just ask. As long as they're not fucking nazis, they're good to go.

AU: It's the final issue of the year here at Absolute Underground, what are your favourite things of the year?

SM: I've actually been doing a sort of AOTY/EPTY battles on Twitter, and currently I'd say my top 5 of albums and EPs are Agriculture's self titled release, Black Pantera's new EP Grio, Zulu's A New Tomorrow, the self titled Neant EP, and ...So Unknown by Jesus Piece. That said, it's been a ludicrously hard crop of albums to narrow down. I've just started listening to the new Andre 3000 experimental flute album and it also rules really hard. Other media awards from the big moose are probably the movies Talk to Me and Beau is Afraid, the video game Lies of P, and that show The Curse

is off to a really promising start.

AU: Big plans for Syrup Moose in 2024?

SM: I think the big thing on the current horizon is the upcoming Underneath record. That band was a big get for the label, and I am fucking pumped to get that thing out to the world. I'm still taking swings at trying to recruit folks,

honestly I have no idea what 2024 has in store. I did buy a screenprinting kit, and have every intention of making some patches so that's a big ol' plan too. I'm also releasing my first pair of albums in 2024 which is absolutely fucking insane.

AU: Anything else to promote?

SM: You can check out the weekly radio show Syrup Moose Radio on 93.9FM CICK out of Smithers, airs every Tuesday from 9pm-11pm. If you're at all interested in some

extremely mid, electronic experimental stuff you can check out my project MEGAFAUNA on Bandcamp, and you should check out my wife's yarn shop, Partea Knits online. It's excellent.

AU: How do people find you online?

SM: I'm on twitter @thesyrumoose and Instagram @SyrupMooseRecords. You can find the label at syrupmooserecords.gay or syrupmooserecords.bandcamp.com. MegaFauna is on Bandcamp at themegafauna.bandcamp.com and you can find the radio show over at SmithersRadio.com.





MEAN BIKINI

Loud, Fast, and Fiery Punk Rock

Interview by Brady Tighe

AU: Who are we talking to today and what do you do?

Mean Bikini: Well you caught us at a great time, because we're all in a van on a tour across the country, and we were just looking for something to do as we watch the prairies go by. For context, Milli does vocals, Josh is guitar, Laurie is bass and Craig is drums

AU: Give us a brief history of your band.

MB (Milli): Mean Bikini was created in the winter of 2021, during the pandemic. At the time me and Josh met, we both were super keen to get something going and to see how our influences could mesh. We spent almost a year with a rotating cast of bassists and drummers before landing on our current line up. Our first show was in Josh's garage, and it was an absolute blast. None of us had played or been to an intimate DIY punk show in ages.

Last year I met Laurie we and ended up doing a tour with us and Pilsgnar. We didn't have a solid bassist at the time, so Laurie offered to take on

bass duty for the tour. Then, at the tour's last show, I got down on one knee in front of the audience, handed them a Hey Y'all to shotgun and asked if they would be our forever bassist. We knew Craig from him playing bass and singing in Pilsgnar. When he offered to fill in for our last drummer at a show, he hadn't drummed since high-school, but he still absolutely killed it. When our last drummer left we figured it would be amazing to have someone

we know so well and love so much as part of the band and wrote up a silly fake contract for Craig to sign and he has been blowing our minds with his ability ever since.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

MB (Josh): Loud, fast, fiery punk rock. Life is hard and it makes you nervy and edgy. We want to take that anxious energy and drive it into something strong and defiant. Together, we can yell "fuck you," at the greedy bastards of the world—and that's beautiful. We're all staring into the void, so let's scream together.

AU: What's the most memorable gig your band has played?

MB (Laurie): This summer we played a festival called Cumberland Wild, which is ironic because it was a pretty tame pop festival. We invited the whole crowd on stage, and got in shit for being too wild. My personal favorite was our first show on this tour. It was a Thursday in Kelowna and Brutal Youth had a big venue booked and it was the event in town everyone was talking about. We got offered a show at a little punk rock pizza place called Dunnennzies, and we almost didn't take the gig because we knew everyone would be at Brutal Youth. However, a tour is tour and we like to play every chance we get. As we got into town we were worried that only 5 people were going to

show up. Then, once we saw how small the venue was we instead became worried that more than 5 people would show up.

The room ended up being packed, even though ticket sales indicated that 11 people paid to get in. Our drummer took up the entire stage and we played on the floor constantly hitting people with the headstocks of our guitars. It might sound like I'm saying the show was a bust but I'm a firm believer in quality over quantity and I have to say every person in that room was there to have a damn good time. By a few songs in people were crowd surfing and Milli was singing to the audience from on top of tables of pizza and beer while the bartender filmed from the back smiling ear to ear.

At the risk of sounding like a motivational cat poster, the whole night was such a nice reminder that any show can be a success if you show up with an open mind and give it your all.

AU: What's the last perfect record you listened to?

MB (Milli): Cheer by Drug Church. The lyrics are honest and candid in a unique way and the composition of the songs is fun, but with some real grit and beautiful melodies

Josh: Bad Nerves self-titled compilation. Just perfect, undeniable power pop.

Laurie: 4 songs about freedom by the Rebel spell. Though its arguably an EP, I could listen to it on repeat 4 times and still call it perfect.

Craig: Is it okay if I pick two? I'm gonna pick two. I just listened to them both back to back, and couldn't pick a winner, so: Trouble Will Find Me by The National, and For Everyone by Brass. Obviously not running the same race, but both so fucking great front to back.

AU: What's the weirdest thing you've seen in public recently?

MB (Laurie): Once again the timing of this interview is perfect. Just a few hours ago we stopped for gas in a small town called Wynyard, Saskatchewan, and as we were outside we saw a two-foot-tall ambulance blasting down the road with its sirens on. At first glance it looked like a giant RC car, but there was definitely an old man

behind the wheel. We loaded in the van as fast as possible and headed after it only to find it was gone.

After unsuccessfully googling "tiny hospitals near me" we asked a couple bikers if they had seen a tiny ambulance whip by with a bald dude sticking out of it. They clearly thought we were fucking with them.

We tracked the ambulance to a tire shop a few doors down and asked if we could take a picture with it. Not only did this lead to us getting to drive it around, but the owner took us back to his house, gave us beer, and let us try out his miniature semi truck.

AU: What's your least favourite song by a good band?

MB (Craig): My least favourite song by an otherwise impeccable band is for sure "Deathsex" By Distillers. Coral fang is fucking incredible front to back, except for that screechy nightmare.

AU: Any shows or tours planned?

MB: As of writing this we have ten dates left of our cross country tour and that's gonna be it for the rest of the year. But these last few months have been busy! We played three festivals and are currently on a 15 date tour across the country

AU: Anything else to promote?

MB (Laurie): Craig and I also run Outhouse Records. If you're a punk band (or really any genre with anti-oppressive politics) give us a shout, we'd love to play you on our radio show, book you some gigs on the west coast, or help you get your albums out there.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

MB (Josh): Thanks Absolute Underground! Stoked there's still a print magazine hyping scrappy and weird Canadian art.

AU: How do people find you online?

MB: @mean.bikini.official on Instagram for shenanigans, Bandcamp and all streaming platforms for tunes.



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CABRAKAÄN

Aztlán

Interview with Marko Cipäktli

Absolute Underground: Welcome back to Absolute Underground, for those unfamiliar with Cabrakaän who are you, and what do you do?

Cabrakaän: Hi! We're Cabrakaän, a symphonic folk metal band from Mexico. We're now based in Calgary, Canada.

AU: What can you tell us about your new album Aztlán?

CÄ: Aztlán is incredibly special to us. After years of setbacks - moving to Canada, the pandemic, and everything that comes along with starting a new life in a new place - we felt that this album would represent all of those things. Above all, the album's concept is all about reconnecting with our cultural roots and bringing them to a new audience. In terms of sound, there are many complex elements drawing on different styles, and this represents how many influences makeup who we are. We also incorporated a lot of orchestration, including a live string ensemble, organs, traditional Mexican folk styles, and more

to truly bring the music to life. Overall, there's something for everyone on this album: it's heavy, symphonic, and folkloric.

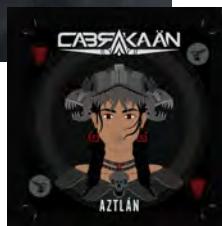
AU: What is Mexican Folk Metal?

CÄ: For us, Mexican folk metal can include traditional Pre-Hispanic instruments, mariachi and huapango styles, corridos (narrative ballads), and lyrical themes that include parts of our history as Mexicans. Combining this with the power of metal helps us re-imagine those styles in brand-new ways.

AU: How do you find being a metal band based in Canada (Calgary, AB) as compared to one in Mexico?

CÄ: Coming to Canada has been the experience of a lifetime for us. Since we played our first festival here in 2016, we've seen a lot of enthusiasm for our music and live performances. Of course, Canada is known for being difficult to tour with snowy winters and long driving distances, but the warmth of Canadians is unmatched and worth the effort. We love it here.

Of course, we began as a band in Mexico, the



music is connected with our country and culture, and it's in our blood. There's a huge metal scene back home, but for that same reason, it can be tricky to stand out. The Mexican metal scene is full of incredible talent, but it often doesn't reach an international audience. We hope to help change that.

AU: Your documentary on the band's inspiration for Mexican Folklore, what do you find is a misconception of Mexican cultural roots?

CÄ: Great question. I think that the documentary gave us a platform to share more about our cultural roots because it's not necessarily that there are misconceptions, but rather that there's a lot that non-Mexicans don't know much about. We want to bring more awareness through our music that Mexican culture is the result of history dating back millennia. We have dark parts of our country's history, but those are all things that make us who we are today.

AU: The band incorporated a lot of orchestration including a live string ensemble, organs, traditional Mexican folk styles, vihuela (Spanish guitar), hompak (Mayan trumpet), etc. What was your favourite part of the writing process for this record with these to create your unique sound?

CÄ: I think our favourite part of the process has been collaborating with great artists to help bring it to life. For myself (Marko) as the drummer, I always gravitate toward the percussive elements to build a song from the ground up. Writing and recording an album that focuses on our cultural past while in a new country was also a rewarding challenge and a highlight for us. Since we couldn't always find pre-Hispanic instruments to use, we had to find creative ways to replicate the sound. Collaborating with the string ensemble, organist, and a Canadian vocalist, has all brought a new life and energy to the music.

AU: Has the band had any difficulties with the reception of your live performances of songs in Spanish compared to the universal English that most bands do lyrics and vocals in?

CÄ: Since we first performed in Canada, we've developed a strong belief that music itself

is a universal language that brings different audiences together. Many European folk bands have successfully reached audiences in languages that aren't widely spoken, and I think it's for the same reason. When folkloric elements are part of the music, and especially when the instruments are colourful and expressive, we're still telling our story in a way that audiences can sense and feel. We've always been fortunate to make great connections with audiences of all languages and geographies. We also sing in Nahuatl, which is an indigenous language. Even listeners who speak Spanish may not all understand it, but the feelings are there. It's about holding on to our history and languages to preserve and keep them relevant for as long as we can.

AU: This is the Halloween issue for Absolute Underground Mag? What is the scariest Mexican Folklore story that our readers would be interested in checking out?

CÄ: Very interesting question! La Llorona is a legend that we learn about in childhood. Plenty of horror movies have used this story and reinterpreted it, but the original legend is one worth reading about. La Llorona is about the vision of a ghostly woman - an apparition - who wanders the streets, weeping and searching for her lost children. We'll leave the rest up to the reader to find out :) We also talk about it in our documentary! Beyond being a scary story, it's connected to pre-Hispanic and post-colonization culture in Mexico.

AU: Do you have any upcoming shows or touring plans for the band?

CÄ: We're working on planning this, and our fans will be the first to hear about it once they've been organized! Stay tuned!

AU: Is there anything else you would like to add for our readers?

CÄ: We hope you like Aztlán! It's the very first album we've recorded outside of Mexico, and it's our most ambitious to date. We're so excited to share it with the world.

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LITTLE BARBERSHOP OF HORRORS

Interview with Founder Daryl Bidner

By Chuck Andrews

Absolute Underground: Who am I speaking with?

Little Barbershop of Horrors: Daryl Bidner.

AU: What is your role at Little Barbershop of Horrors?

LBSH: Owner/Barber.

AU: Where and in what city are you located?

LBSH: We are in the heart downtown Victoria.

AU: How long have you been in business?

LBSH: We just opened Nov 1st, 2023. But I started doing cuts in my bedroom 2.5 years ago trying

to build my clientele until I had the courage to open a real shop

AU: What's exciting and new in the last month at Little Barbershop of Horrors?

LBSH: Well, it has only been a month since our soft opening everything is exciting, I love this city and love being so accessible and have such a great location for walk-ins there's always friends and people coming in to say hi

AU: Do you play in any local bands?

LBSH: Yes, I do.



VOICE OF THE STREETS

AU: Which ones? And can you tell us a little bit about them?

LBSH: I play in a punk band called Concrete Grave. Which is a total oil! Style band we just started as a fun project between friends and just put out our first tape on attack with force records and can hear it on bandcamp.

AU: What makes your barbershop unique?

LBSH: I'd say what makes it unique is the punk rock music playing, the art, and the weird taxidermy plastered all over the walls. You don't see that very much in Victoria, it's got a more European feel.

AU: Who designed the logo for the shop?

LBSH: My buddy Rizzo from Montréal made it for me, then My tattoo artist Kyle Carter revamped it when we relocated in November.

AU: Is there anything else you would like to add?



LBSH: If you're in Victoria come visit the shop, or just come say hi! We also started selling records; strictly punk oil! and related kind of stuff.
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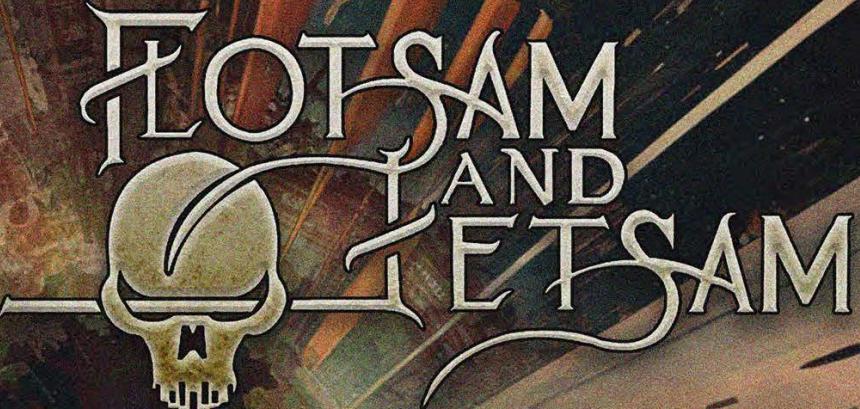
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BLAST FROM THE PAST

features both Steve Hackett and Trevor Rabin in great in-depth articles. It is out now and featured on the

cover is none other than ... you guessed it ..KISS! I have my copy too. As this is a Christmas Issue for A.U. and KISS have just retired from touring for 50 years I thought it would be fitting to mention the band that claims "You wanted the best and you got the best, the hottest band in the world ...KISS!"

Kiss was my February feature in AU magazine issue 110 and It reviews their debut show on January 30th 1973 and it's only fitting as this December 1st and 2nd they performed their final concerts ever at none other than NYC's Madison Square Gardens in 2023. Pay per view and all. I was fortunate to experience 4 of the 'End Of The Road' shows myself. I saw the first show in Vancouver in January and also Toronto in 2019 and then this past November I saw both the Vancouver and Calgary shows as well with my buddy Steve. This was a bucket list in Calgary for me as in 1977, on July 31st I was to see KISS with Cheap Trick at the OK Corral stadium (now gone) as I was a KISS fan since 1976. Yet I ended up getting grounded for being too hyper and stayed home that evening sulking in my room. So, in 2023 to see KISS live in Calgary seemed like a fitting ending and a bucket list too. I was also during soundcheck offered to interview Paul Stanley (due to my articles in AU getting noticed by KISS management) and it was surreal. One question I asked was "Being that it's the same week as when you recorded your debut album in November 1973, do you have any humble recollections or emotional feelings today as it has been 50 years since then?" His answer was perfect "We've been so blessed, and I can't say that there's any evidence of emotional attachment that isn't attached to today. I mean look at us, this is 50 years later and it's unbelievable. We will have a packed arena tonight and we're all celebrating something that we all made possible for each other." Which is when I blurted out 'And you look like you're in your 30's' to which he said while laughing "That's because you're standing way over there."

With that I'd like to wish you all a safe and healthy "Merry Christmas" this year and all the best for everyone in 2024.

Rock out and Rrrroll on, over, onward and upward.

Sincerely,
Clark 'Super' Mantei



BLAST FROM THE PAST

December 1983 until Kissmas 2023

By Clark 'Super' Mantei

Hello again past and future past blasters.

As my last two articles opened up to my discovery of music in late 1982 and then all through 1983, I was constantly discovering music like never before. Most of the acts were from the late 1960's, and a decade and a half later I was in full collection mode of these artists albums and saw most of them live in concert in 1983 and my world was open to the magical discovery of sound and vision. Bands like Supertramp and solo artists like Neil Young or Robert

Plant opened up my senses to new heights of encapsulating the glorious feelings that their music gave to me as a 16-year-old kid. I'm forever grateful to Absolute Underground for letting me have a page to look back on those wonderous daze gone by.

Having been a KISS fan from late 1976 until 1982 I knew that they were my band and then that day came when that magical milkcrate of albums appeared in my friend's house in September of 1982. It was a revelation and as a drummer to discover The Who and Led Zeppelin I knew there were new heights to strive for. Even discovering Frank Zappa and The Police showed me incredible avenues of great music. I was all heart with enthusiasm and all ears on my turntable. I was a drummer in air cadets and in a concert band and yes, I knew of RUSH so I already knew that incredible drumming was possible. And I memorized all of Neil Peart's playing while air-drumming to my headphones. My world was complete.

Then came December 1983 when new songs were broadcast from my home stereo from two bands. Those songs were "Owner of a Lonely Heart" by a group called Yes and also "Mama" and "That's All" from a band named Genesis. These songs alone made me bike downtown to A&B Sound to find these new releases right there on the shelves and I bought them both. I was in a trio as a drummer and learning to play Rock'n'Roll songs live with my school buddies, and we were all aware of this new Yes album. It was titled '90125' and with all the lyrics inside to all these incredible songs it was a journey to hear all this magic. All three of us wanted to hope to be this good one day. Dare to dream. Also, I noticed that the drummer and singer of Genesis was also one Phil Collins who had been the drummer for Robert Plant whom I had just seen live earlier that October in Vancouver. To recommend these albums today is why I am writing this article. It is as simple as that. I also discovered that both Yes and Genesis had been around since the late



features two great musicians that are Simon Collins (son of Phil Collins) and Kelly Nordstrom, who is an incredible prog rock guitarist among so many other instruments, and his history is immense. The back of the album gives note to all the groups he's been in and I even read my name there too. I'm glad he's a great friend of mine in this life.

I highly recommend this album and these 2 guys seriously knocked it out of the park.

Then we have the new release from Steve Hackett (former guitarist with Genesis) who is about to release his 28th solo LP soon called The Circus and the Nightwhale Lastly we see that none other than the Genesis mastermind "Peter Gabriel" has just released his 10th solo album entitled 'I/O' and it is incredible as usual. He's just completed a tour also.

These albums past and present will make great gifts to you and your friends. Bravo Simon and Kelly.

I highly recommend them as progressive art rock is alive and well as we move into 2024.

That being said, the newest issue of Guitar Player

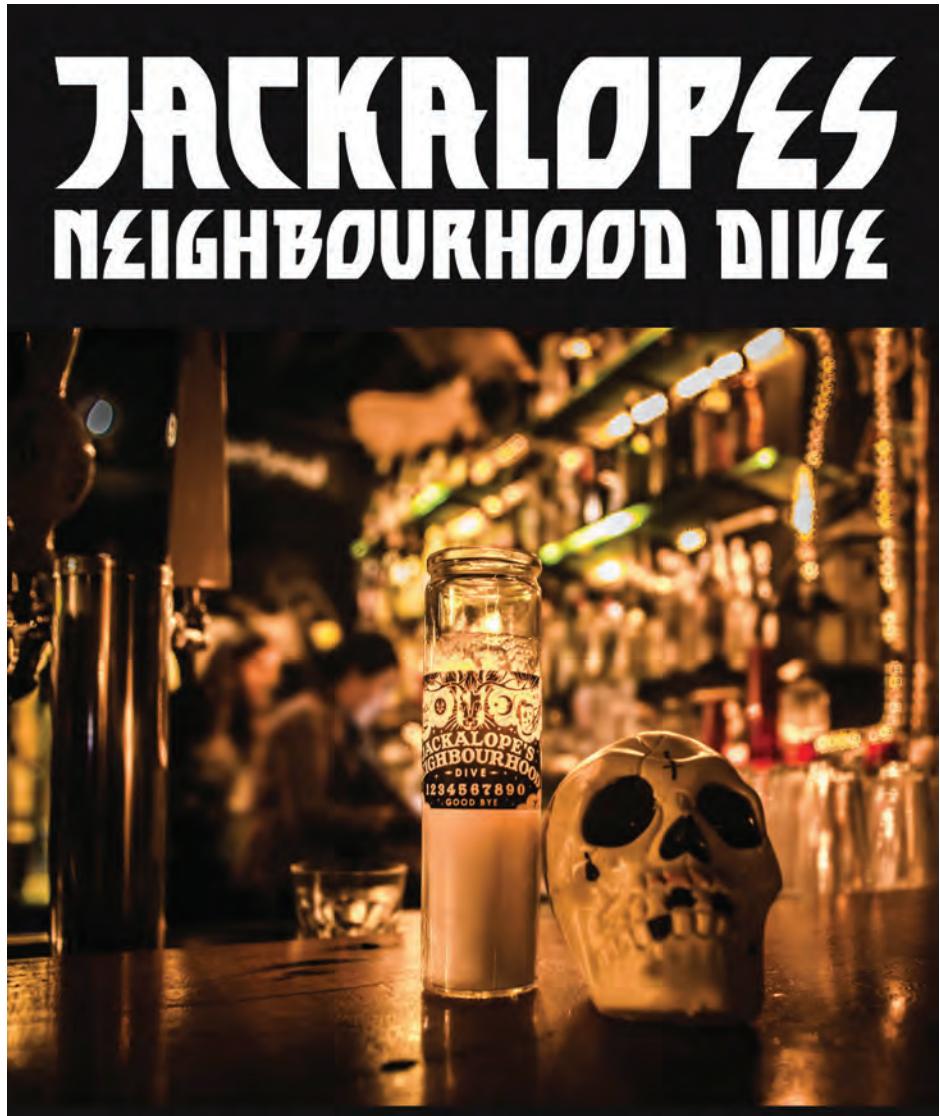
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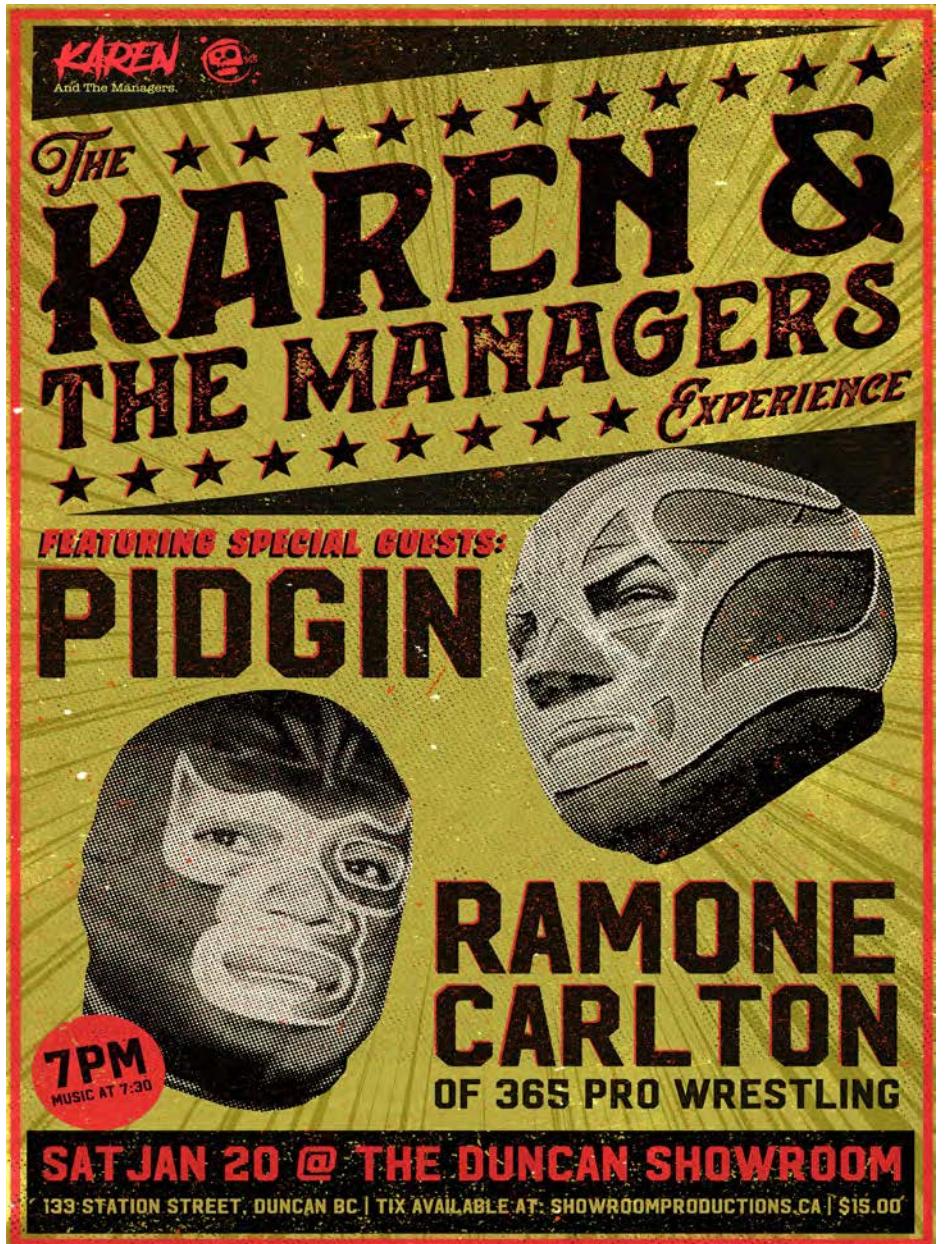
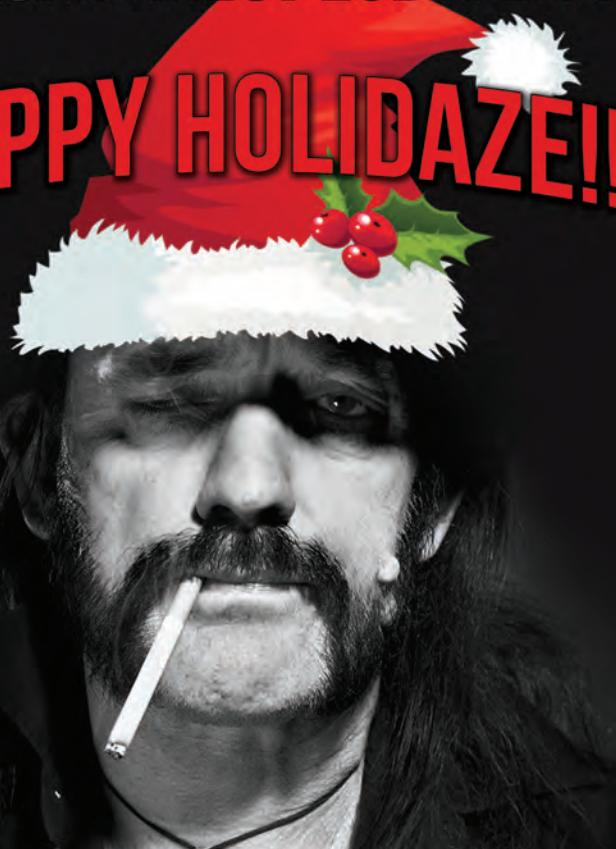
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JOE LEDOUX Skateboard Magician Sleight of Hand Magic, Fine Art, and Skateboarding

Interview by Brady Tighe

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today?

Joe Ledoux: My name is Joe Ledoux and I call myself a magical artist. I perform and blend my three favorite art forms: sleight of hand magic, fine art, and skateboarding.

AU: How does one become a skateboarding magician?

JL: When I was a child, I saw my sister's boyfriend on a skateboard, moving around the sidewalks without ever putting his foot down. But when I stepped on, it wouldn't move like that for me. It seemed extremely magical to me, that someone's energy and the way they move could cause it to animate like that.

When I was around 10 years old, a magician came to my school and performed - he came off the stage, walked into the audience, and pulled shining coins from people's ears. I fell in love with magic at that moment.

This seemed like a natural evolution to me, to join magic and skateboarding. Magicians use sleight of hand, skateboarders use sleight of feet. A kickflip was originally called a "magic flip" because people didn't understand how the board was flipping when the trick first hit the scene.

AU: You approach skateboarding with an interesting philosophy, care to go deeper into that?

JL: When I first started skating, it was all about tricks - how many stairs I could ollie, how I could go bigger and bigger. The more I studied with illuminated masters of magic, I've come to realize that the person who can get the biggest reaction using the least is the winner. My philosophy of skating has become very zen: less is more. I have a stack of skateboards on the floor that start with a regular size board and goes all the way up toward the ceiling with handboards, fingerboards, to miniature sized skateboards. I think skateboarding is like painting: whether I'm using my feet or hands, I'm still painting; if I'm using my fingers or feet on a skateboard, I don't see them as different things but part of one philosophy of skating. Now I just skate in my living room, which is very ritualistic and meditative - sometimes I'm just spinning the board in my hands or making the boards levitate, disappear, and reappear. What I've really tried to do is find a style inspired by

SHREO SESSION

martial arts, and artists like Van Gogh and Goya who painted into their late lives. The goal is that I can find a way to skate and progress with age.

AU: How did you get into skateboarding originally?

JL: When I was in fifth or sixth grade, I noticed other kids who skated at school. There was a kid in the neighborhood who showed me an ollie; I would practice it in my backyard in the grass and it felt so magical to levitate off the ground. This was before social media, before YouTube, when you had to rely on someone's word that you could actually do this trick and get in the air. There was a trick that felt almost mystical, called an ollie impossible, where you'd get the board into the air and cause it to rotate around your back foot - I'd hear people talk about it at recess and a lot of kids thought it was impossible to do. I practiced it for months and one day I finally landed it.

AU: How did you get into magic?

JL: I picked it up as a child, but when I got to college I stopped doing it to pursue art and animation. Animation is often defined as 'the illusion of life,' and some of the earliest animators were magicians - they'd show films on stage as part of a bigger performance. I moved to Los Angeles to explore my passions and visited the Magic Castle, and as the saying goes, "When the student is ready, the teacher appears." While I was there, I met Jeff McBride, who became my magic mentor. From there, I started blending my love of art and magic. Jeff taught me to blend my passions together and how to pursue magic not just as a career, but as a way of life.

AU: What is the process behind your YouTube videos?

JL: My YouTube videos are things that take years to create. My first video, The Magic of Skateboarding, was a promo video to show off some tricks that were taught in the zine I released of the same name, and to show the connections between skating and magic. My second video, Rekindled, was about how I lost

everything and could no longer ollie. It was about rekindling my relationship with skateboarding as an art, and to realize that if I'm 90 and still have a fingerboard in my hands, I could be happy. My third video, Nothing to Land, just came out a month or so ago. It's about reaching a point where skateboarding isn't even about landing tricks anymore, but about how I can animate the board.

The process for all these videos has been different, but each starts with an intention. Once that is set and I have a motivation or purpose or message, they seem to evolve naturally.

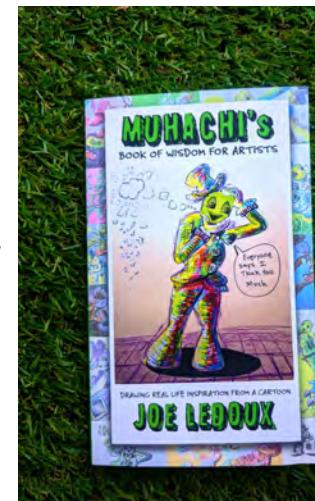
AU: Are there any skateboarders who influenced your style?

JL: Rodney Mullen has been one of my biggest inspirations. I was a big fan of The Search for Animal Chin by Stacy Peralta; it was one of the first skateboard movies to have a plot, and I liked the mystical sage skateboard figure. My friend Abe Dubin (aka Orange Man) inspires me a lot. Dani Abulhawa really impressed me with her talks

on thinking about skating symbolically, and how the push of a skateboard can be a metaphor for progress and growth, about human potential and resilience as a person.

AU: Do you have any upcoming live performances or events?

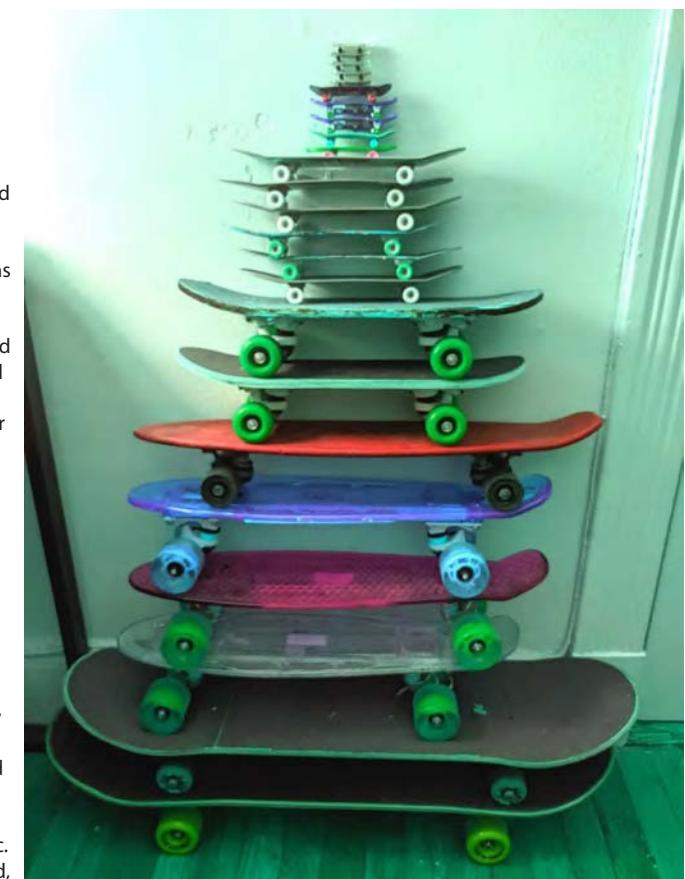
JL: Lately I've been working on new ways to perform. Zoom has been inspiring me and I'm working on a Zoom show for the future. I'm also working on a new fan club for my cartoon character Muhachi, where people can get a monthly package of merch alongside interactive performance elements (like chatting with the character online) and optical illusions to see magic in your own home. If you work with an art gallery or museum, you can tell them about me to bring me to you; I book performances in spaces like this and am happy to show



up and perform.

AU: Anything else to promote?

JL: I have a book called Muhachi's Book of Wisdom for Artists. It's a coffee table style book of my art paired with interviews featuring advice for artists. There are some amazing artists who shared their thoughts, like Raymond Pettibon



and Daniel Brummel from the band Ozma. The book was designed to inspire artists of all types; painters, poets, magicians, writers, anything. You can buy a copy on my website, joeledoux.com.

Shoutout to my skateboard sponsors, Plateau Skate Co and Ugly Star Bolt Co. They're selling clothing featuring my character Muhachi, and we're working on a new skateboard deck coming out soon. We also just came up with my signature skate bolts, which are shaped like red spotted shrooms.

AU: How do people find you online?

JL: You can visit my website at joeledoux.com. You can find me on Instagram at @joeledoumagic. Check out my YouTube channel to see the skate videos mentioned earlier, @joeledouxmagic.



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STRIGAMPIRE

All to Dominate

WACKEN METAL BATTLE CANADA 2023 CHAMPS

Absolute Underground: For those unfamiliar with Strigampire, what can you tell us about the band?

Strigampire: We are Strigampire, the architects of Extreme Rock, a genre that combines the aggression of metal with that certain something we just can't let go of. Ah, it must be the art of partying! We've been shaking the stage since 2001 and are about to release our third album, which sounds bigger than anything we've done before! We can't wait to let you hear it!

AU: The band won the 2023 Wacken Metal Battle Canada, how was it being a band from Trois Rivieres, QC playing the world's largest metal festival Wacken Open Air? How did you find the reception from fans at the fest?

STRIG: It was quite a wild experience! All of this happened quickly when you think that in February of the same year, we made our comeback on stage with a new lineup after 3 years of inactivity in live performances. It was downright insane over there! It was pretty much

the stage and crowd size I'd like to have every time we perform!

The audience's reaction was really cool! Right after the show, fans by the gate were waiting to take photos with me and showering us with praise! It was awesome! I gave away all the CDs I had brought to Germany to these hardcore fans who took the time to show us their support! Throughout the festival and even at the airport, I met people who recognized us. To be told, "Hey, you're the one who sang in the band that represented Canada! Oh yeah, your set was hot!" It's so much fun to hear!

AU: What was your favourite moment at Wacken?

STRIG: Without a doubt, our performance! It was a dream come true. You can see excerpts from our performance in our new music video, and I believe you can feel how much we enjoyed the moment! A crowd as far as the eye can see, we had never experienced anything like that. It's so cool!

Otherwise, all the time we spent at the artists' village bar! We had unlimited drinks, and we closed the bar for 5 days straight. By the end of the festival, I think it's safe to say that the staff knew us personally! Hahahaha!

AU: What advice would you give bands competing in the competition for 2024?

STRIG: Make sure your performance is well-rehearsed and well-prepared. Pay attention to the details of your set, from musical execution to stage presence. If you win a round, take note of the judges' points and work to improve any negatives for the next round.

Connect with your audience and the judges. Try as much as possible to make the people in the crowd feel that you're playing for each of them

and that you're having a blast seeing them have fun! Judges often appreciate bands that not only deliver an excellent performance but also know how to interact with the audience.

AU: Strigampire has its third album out "All to Dominate", what can you tell us about it?

STRIG: All to Dominate is the result of our collaboration with the talented Christian Donaldson (Cryptopsy). It's undoubtedly Strig's most powerful-sounding album! The nine original tracks are filled with unleashed riffs, but while maintaining a melodic and catchy vibe. The lyrics explore different themes, including resilience, pursuing goals, and mourning. After over 20 years of existence for the band, this album reflects our dedication to this art and showcases the diverse influences that shape our music. It's an intense journey of about 45 minutes that we are very proud to share.

AU: What would you like fans to take away from their listening experience of the record?

STRIG: We hope our fans will take away an energetic and dynamic experience from listening to our new album. After a five-year wait, we introduced two new members, and unlike "One Fix" in 2018, Willy Thousand contributed to the songwriting, adding a distinctive touch to our sound. Chris's exceptional production has added power to the songs, and we've already received positive feedback with the two tracks we've released.

AU: How was it working with a legend like Christian Donaldson (Cryptopsy) to produce the record?

STRIG: Collaborating with Christian was an incredible experience. His expertise brought a dimension of precision and power to our sound. Chris is incredibly friendly and made us feel comfortable right away! He brings out the best in us when we record, and it makes a significant difference! His advice and meticulous approach in the studio contributed significantly to the overall quality of the album. It was an honor to collaborate with such an experienced professional, and we believe his influence played a crucial role in making this album one of our best works to date.

ABSOLUTE METAL



AU: It's Xmas time... Santa has given you one band on the naughty list to pummel the stage and brutalize the mosh pit with, what band would you choose?

STRIG: Definitely Cradle of Filth! They are the band that sparked my interest in pursuing this path in life! I listen to them less today, but their classics still give me as many chills as they did in adolescence.

AU: Do you have any tour plans for 2024 for Strigampire?

STRIG: 2023 was the year when we did the most shows, I believe, since our beginnings. In January 2024, we're launching our album here in Trois-Rivières. It's shaping up to be quite a party! Two other shows are scheduled in the same month, and another date is booked for early February.

Afterward, we'll consider offers that seem genuinely interesting, but we'll focus more on writing the next album. This decision is based on the fact that Johnny, a founding member of the band, will become a father for the first time in April. So, we'll adapt to the situation while continuing to move forward in ways other than being on the road!

AU: Is there anything else you would like to add for our readers?

STRIG: Absolutely! We want to express our heartfelt gratitude to our fans who have been with us throughout our journey. Your support means everything to us, and we can't wait for you to experience the energy and intensity of "All To Dominate." We also want to extend a special thank you to Christian Donaldson for his incredible work in producing the album.

Keep rocking!



Blue Oil

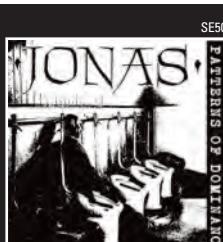
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Ferocious Deathrash
Victoria/Langford, BC, Canada



JONAS

Patterns of Dominance
12" EP | 1996
Blistering Fast Political Grindcore
Metchosin, BC, Canada



AS SHERIFF

Six Ways To The Ace
12" LP | 1989-70
Folk / Blues Psych Rock
Victoria, BC, Canada



DISTORTED INFLUENCE

Cold
12" LP | 1992
Crossover Thrash
Victoria, BC, Canada



MX-80 SOUND

Big Hits And Other Bits
12" LP | 1976
Proto-Punk / Art-Rock
Bloomington, IN, USA



PHARAONS

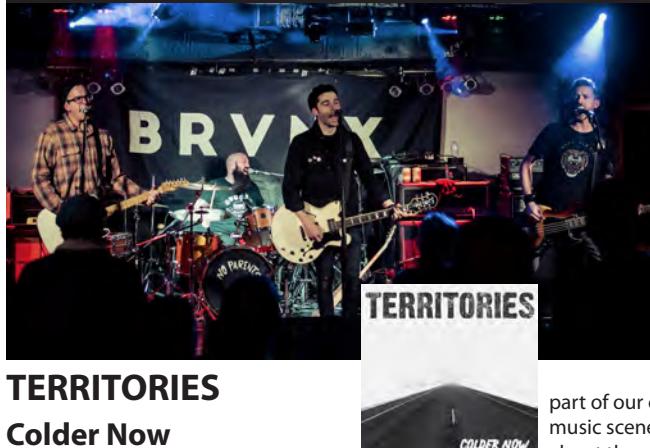
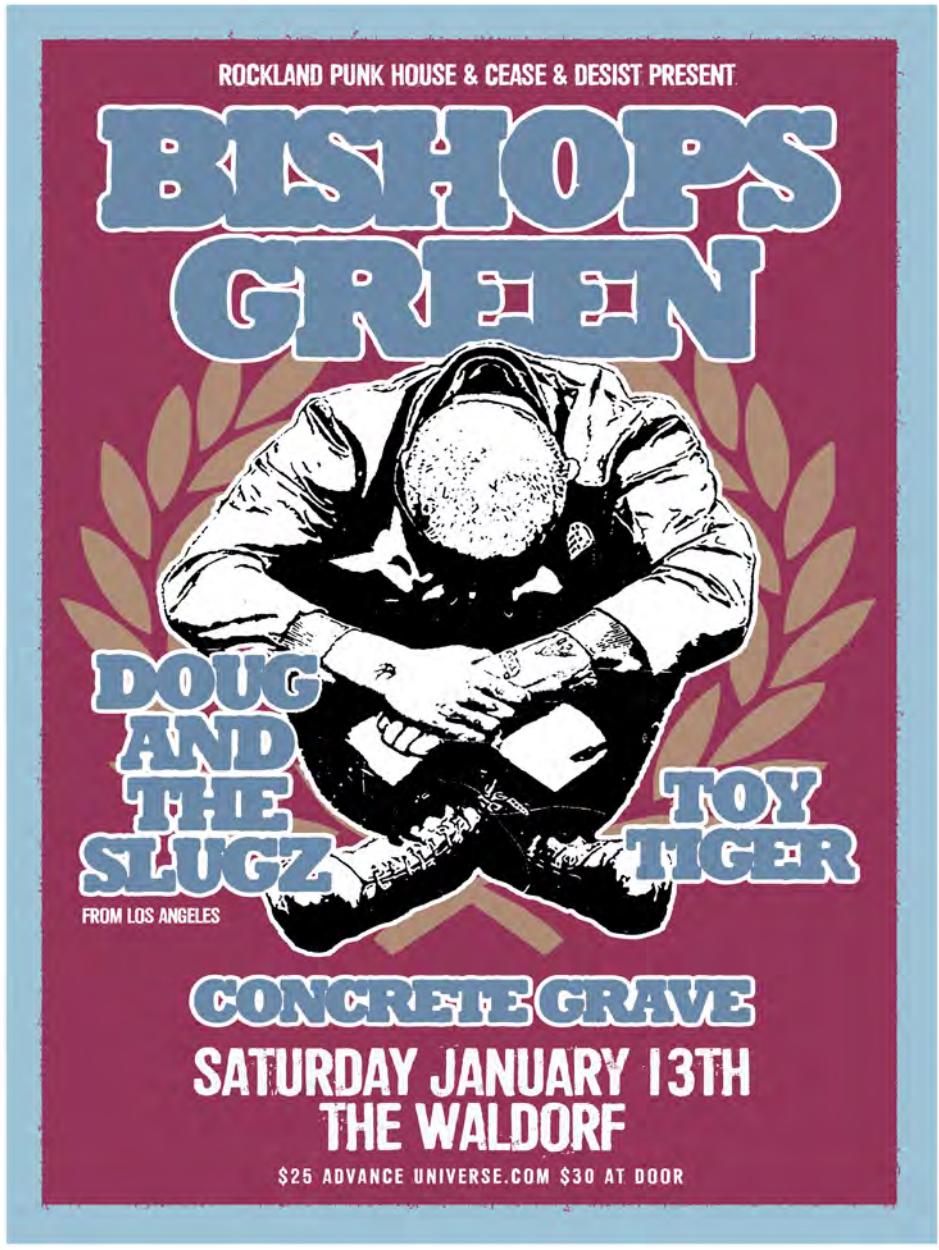
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TERRITORIES

Colder Now

Interview with drummer Eric Jablonski

By Chuck Andrews

Absolute Underground: Who am I speaking to and what are you responsible for in Territories?

Territories: I'm Eric, head of the drums and percussion department, president of #rhythmnation, chief officer of humor, the brains and brawn of this low rent operation, part-time social media whore and only person in the band reliable enough to complete this interview.

AU: Territories are from Calgary, Alberta, correct? What's the music scene like in Calgary?

TERR: Calgary is home turf for Territories. Our music scene has had ebbs and flows over many years but has always had a solid backbone of great bands. I would highly recommend checking out Quit It!, No Brainer, Harsh, Brain Bent and Closetalkers. We also have had stable and reliable venues such as the Palomino and Dickens, that house consistent live music. Recently there has been a re-emergence of an All-Ages scene which has been very exciting, and the kids seem to be craving in-person experiences again which is very refreshing.

AU: The band grew out of a previous Calgary band called Knucklehead. What's the difference in the lineup between Knucklehead

and Territories, and is anyone else involved?

TERR: Three of the current Territories members are Knucklehead alumni (Myself, Kyle, and Matty.) Territories also includes Mikey on lead guitar, and he is an old friend that used to play in a Calgary based band called Rum Runner. Knucklehead will always be a part of our DNA and the band was a big

part of our collective growing up in the music scene. We still share fond memories about those younger days touring and whiling out.

AU: Your newest record, Colder Now, just came out last month on Pirates Press Records? What would you like to say about the new album?

TERR: Colder Now was officially released November 3 on Pirates Press Records and is also available to stream RIGHT NOW on all platforms. We had a chance to release a few singles beforehand for the songs "Superhero," "10A Street," and "Powder Keg," to build some hype. The feedback has been very positive so far. We are really proud of this collection of songs and how it came together as a cohesive album. We recorded it at Rain City Recorders in Vancouver BC with the audio wizard Jesse Gander (highly recommend for all things punk, rock, metal.) This was the first recording session with Mikey on guitar and he slayed his parts.

AU: What's your favourite song from Colder Now?

TERR: Personally, my favorite song right now from the new album is "Pacific Ghost." It was written as an ode to Chi Pig of SNFU and it continues to be an ear-worm for me with its catchy, melodic, driving tempo. And goddamn, the drums are really good on that track!

AU: My favourite is "Superhero," it has the catchiest chorus!

TERR: "Superhero," is another fun track off Colder

PIRATES PRESS RECORDS

was involved in the vinyl production. When we regrouped as Territories, we approached the Pirates Press gang first as they have always been great supporters of our music, they are hard-working and genuine folks, and we were pumped to be able to continue to be part of the family.

AU: What can you say about Vancouver's Vicious Cycles?

TERR: We are truly, madly, deeply in love with the boys of Vicious Cycles. They are old friends and great supporters of the band. We just played a show with them in Vancouver in November and there are always a lot of hugs and laughs when they are around. Kyle and Norman can find a corner and talk motorbikes for hours while the rest of us shoot the shit about music. Vicious Cycles were one of my wedding bands, so they hold a special place in my personal history. Check them out ASAP if you haven't heard them!

AU: Where are you guys playing next?

TERR: Edmonton, Alberta will be our next show in the new year. We have been looking at opportunities to get out East in Canada (Toronto/Montreal), hoping to get down the states to play with some label-mates, as well as looking at a possible rip to Germany (they have been streaming/listening hard and we have taken notice!)

AU: What else would you like to add?

TERR: We have been checking out Absolute Underground for many years and we truly appreciate your dedication and commitment to supporting punk rock music!

Press kit: piratespressrecords.com/territories-epk/

Stream the new album: vyd.co/coldernow

Buy stuff: shop.piratespressrecords.com/pages/territories

Insta: [territories_band](#)





AN ARM AND A LEG: The Cost of Serious VHS Collecting

By Josh Schafer

Editor's Note: (This piece of writing was originally published on LunchmeatVHS.com way back in June of 2011! Over a decade ago?! Crazy. Please keep that in mind as we rewind back to this retrospectively telling time!)

Recent events on eBay have solidified the notion that VHS fandom and collecting have been kicked up to an entirely new level. For the past few years, prices of tapes have been sending shocks and awes throughout the VHS collector community, undoubtedly inspiring grunts of chagrin and disbelief to some of the avid aficionados of video. Tapes such as *The People Who Own the Dark*, *Last House on Dead End Street*, (both on the Sun Video label), *Screams of a Winter Night*, *Snuff* and a slew of other obscure gems demand sums that boggle one's mind, consistently passing the \$100 mark (purportedly up to \$800 in some instances!) on all their appearances on the eBay market through the past couple years.

This was, retrospectively, a harbinger of times to come. Another tape that bolsters this phenomenon as it is breaking the bank for some collectors is the elusive and highly desirable Planet Video version of *Nightmare* (*Nightmares in a Damaged Brain*), topping out at \$333.00 just this past year. Wow, right? I mean, that's A LOT of money for just one tape. But just when you thought things couldn't get any crazier, I came across an auction that ended just this past week for what seems to be The Holy Grail of VHS collecting: *Tales from the Quadead*

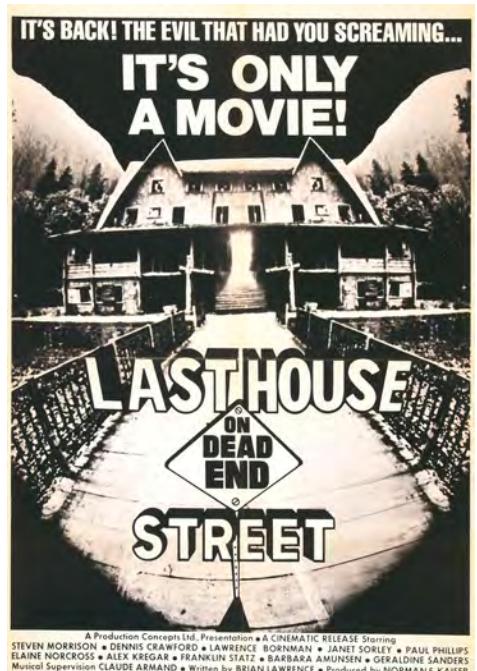
Zone (the infamous SOV flick from Chester Turner, the same director of *Black Devil Doll from Hell*). How much did this tape go for you ask? Well, after 36 hard-hitting bids, this tape brought in a whopping \$660.00!! It's a situation that is extremely exciting and somewhat flattering for the format, but is undeniably ironic, somewhat unsettling and decidedly prohibitive to the everyday collector.

Let me explain my angle: it's ironic because when I first started grabbing tapes, they were dirt cheap. Most folk thought VHS tapes were just that – dirt – a dead format that nobody gave a crap about. Wrong! In their indifference, I found joy. And it was an extremely affordable joy. I would spend maybe \$10 and walk away with at least 10 new trips into the weird and wonderful. But now, with eBay users paying these outrageous sums of money

for tapes, it's hard to see where this whole thing is taking the collector sub-culture. That's where the unsettling part comes in. Do these prices make these tapes unattainable to the everyday video collector? They absolutely do. I surely don't have the nerve to spend my rent money on a VHS tape, no matter how badly I want it. However, that's the nature of the collector beast: certain items within a genre of collectibles become coveted and highly sought-after and bring incredible sums of money. As the old adage goes: things are worth what people are willing to pay for them. So, to that end, there is little we can do about it but accept it and marvel at its absurdity. But with all of this going on, it's difficult not to recognize the real excitement in all this. Sure, it's slightly annoying to see tapes going for this much (this sentiment is more pronounced with old-school tape heads, of course), and it's easy to get sore about

losing out on a tape because it goes for way more than you can afford; but for some, this sort of instance can be a conversation piece to mystify and intrigue the uninitiated and give them a radical glimpse into the fantastic world of collecting and preserving the VHS tape. For example, "Hey, yeah, I collect VHS tapes; it's a lot fun, you know? So many cool movies..." And then you get the standard reply, "VHS tapes? Really? That's cool / weird / kind of funny" And then you can say, "Oh, yeah, there's an entirely fervent sub-culture with it. Most tapes are cheap and it's a great way to build up your library, but I've seen single tapes for over \$600! It's crazy!" And that, my fellow Videovores, can pique anyone's interest. If anything, these

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online auctions prove beyond any doubt VHS collecting is as alive and well as ever. And it's starting to get a little pricey. That's why us over here at Lunchmeat encourage you all to kick it old-school and pay routine visits to thrift shops, yard sales and flea markets: the places where VHS is still the best bargain on earth.



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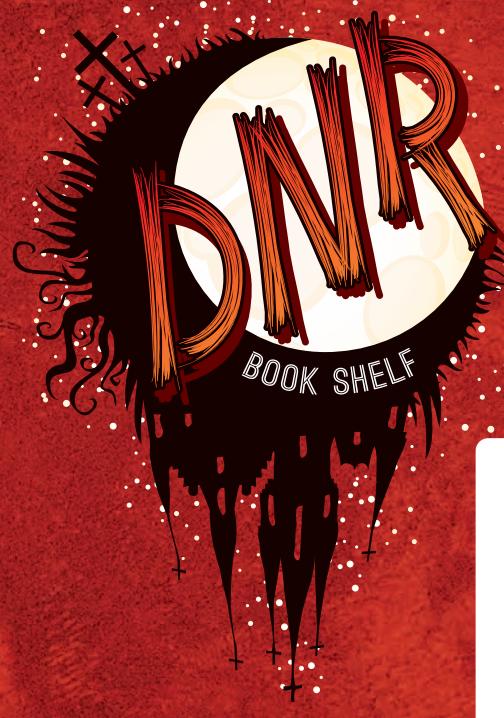
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HEROES OF THE METAL UNDERGROUND: THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO 1980S AMERICAN INDEPENDENT METAL BANDS

Alexandros Anesiadis, Yiannis Skaropoulos (Contributor)

Feral House

August 29, 2023

Alexandros Anesiadis is an expert in the history of how heavy metal evolved into a phenomenon with publications like *Crossover the Edge*, and *We Can Be the New Wind*. And in his latest, *Heroes of the Metal Underground*, this collaboration with Yannis Skaropoulos, a Professor of Visual Cultural Studies at Panteion University, Athens, is more than just an encyclopaedia! It's an excellent look at every indie artist that emerged during the 80s in the United States of America!

As for why this era is important, that's because this was when heavy metal music became a commercial enterprise. Record labels had to stay on top of the trends, and sadly, they could only select a handful of musicians that would define the sound we hear on the radio and can buy at a general music store. Just who was left behind were groups who simply kept on going. Instead of grumbling at another's success, they were pumping out their own releases to sell after their stage shows. These hard to find recordings are out there, but it'd be quite the challenge to locate any of them these days!

What makes this 625-page book a beautiful reference work is that each entry outlines how each band came to be and how they kept going. There are even brief interviews with them. And in each profile, there's a member who candidly speaks about their heydays. Even though not every group is presently active, it's nice to have the Internet by my side so that I can search the SoundCloud for samples instead of simply reading about it.

While I wonder if the authors will consider another compendium, only an interview with them can answer that. I'd love to see a continuation; While I realise that covering the whole of Europe will be tough, I doubt they alone are able tackle it. For Canada, the task should be fairly easy, and the best way to approach expanding this resource guide is to



NINETEEN CLAWS AND A BLACK BIRD

Agustina Bazterrica,
Sarah Moses (Translator)

Scribner
June 20, 2023

After the immense popularity of the English-language translation of Agustina Bazterrica's "Tender is the Flesh", it follows that readers eager for her next translated release would line up like lambs humans to the slaughter. "Nineteen Claws and a Black Bird" is a short story collection of 20 tales that play with perception, perspective, and the senses, though not always to convincing effect.

Beginning with dentures shattering on patio tiles (immediately before the body that follows) and ending with disturbing figures in a dark subway tunnel, The author's "Claws" vary as widely as the traumas that people can inflict—whether it be on others or themselves. Bazterrica's writing in this collection is often infused with a captivating surrealism, turning the reading journey into a visual feast for the mind's eye. Some of the stories peppered throughout are rather less engaging however, even bordering on overwrought, but the veritable roulette wheel of experience gives its own distinct pleasure in the uncertainty of just what kind of encounter comes next.

Short story collections, after all, are by their very nature something of a mixed bag, and in that way "Nineteen Claws and a Black Bird" is no different. Nevertheless, if you decide to take a chance on it you will be sure to find something rather singularly unique and decidedly unnerving.

Laura Phaneuf

THEURGY: THEORY AND PRACTICE. THE MYSTERIES OF THE ASCENT TO THE DIVINE

P. D. Newman
Inner Traditions

December 5, 2024
Theurgy was first divined in the Second Century, in the Chaldean Oracles. It is an ancient magic practice in

which practitioners divinised their souls and achieved mystical union with a deity, The One or The Demiurge.

In this authoritative study, Newman pushes the roots of theurgy beyond the second century, beyond the time of Homer. He also

crowdsources. That way, everything Anesiadis's work has set up can be a benchmark for other information that's still to come.

Ed Sum

links theurgy to certain shamanic practices such as Anabasis-soul ascent, and Katabasis-soul descent, all forms of shamanic soul flight. Beautifully written and researched, this fine book would be of particularly great interest to readers of *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad*, but any reader with a soul will find much to savour in this fine work.

Steve Earles

is a balm, and even at its most saccharine or simplistic, it remains meaningful, because these words come not from a self-help publisher or a seasoned huckster of platitudes, but a man who's been in the trenches and is still climbing his way out. Worth a read for anyone trying to figure out how to live.

Tyler Mattes

WATCHING THE WORLD DIE: NUCLEAR THREAT FILMS OF THE 1980S

Mike Bogue
McFarland

October 26, 2023
I absolutely love the 80's, if there is an afterlife I hope it's an Eternal 80s where spandex rules supreme and Cliff Burton still lives and there's a new George A. Romero and John Carpenter film...every week!

Now, I love 80's films and the Nuclear Threat was a big part of some of those films, as explained by Mike Bogue in his most excellent book!

Classic 80's Post-Apocalypse action movies like my beloved 'Escape From New York' and 'Mad Max 2' rub shoulders with truly disturbing movies like 'Threads' and 'The Day After'. These movies performed a positive act for the world by showing the horrendous consequences of nuclear war.

Mike goes through the decade on a year by year basis, which makes it an enjoyable read. Mark isn't afraid to give his opinion. I don't always agree with him but his analysis is always thought-provoking, which is great. Overall, an intelligent and entertaining book which deserves the widest possible audience. Anyone who loves the 80's will especially love this book!

Steve Earles

LOOKING GLASS SOUND

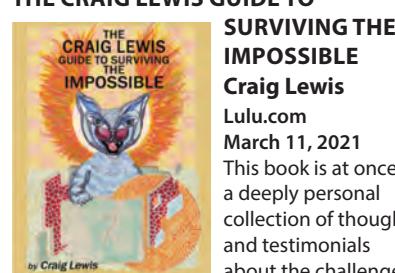
Catrina Ward
Tor Nightfire
August 8, 2023

As it is with many a spooky story or disturbing tale, this book opens the scene in coastal Maine. A cottage on Whistler Bay is where teenaged Wilder Harlow and his parents are vacationing in the summer of 1989. There Wilder meets two other teens, Nat and Harper, and while away the summer on youthful adventures and misadventures as only the young and hormonal can do so well. As vacation comes to a close the three solemnly swear a pact to return to Whistler Bay every summer and reunite, no matter what happens during the many months between.

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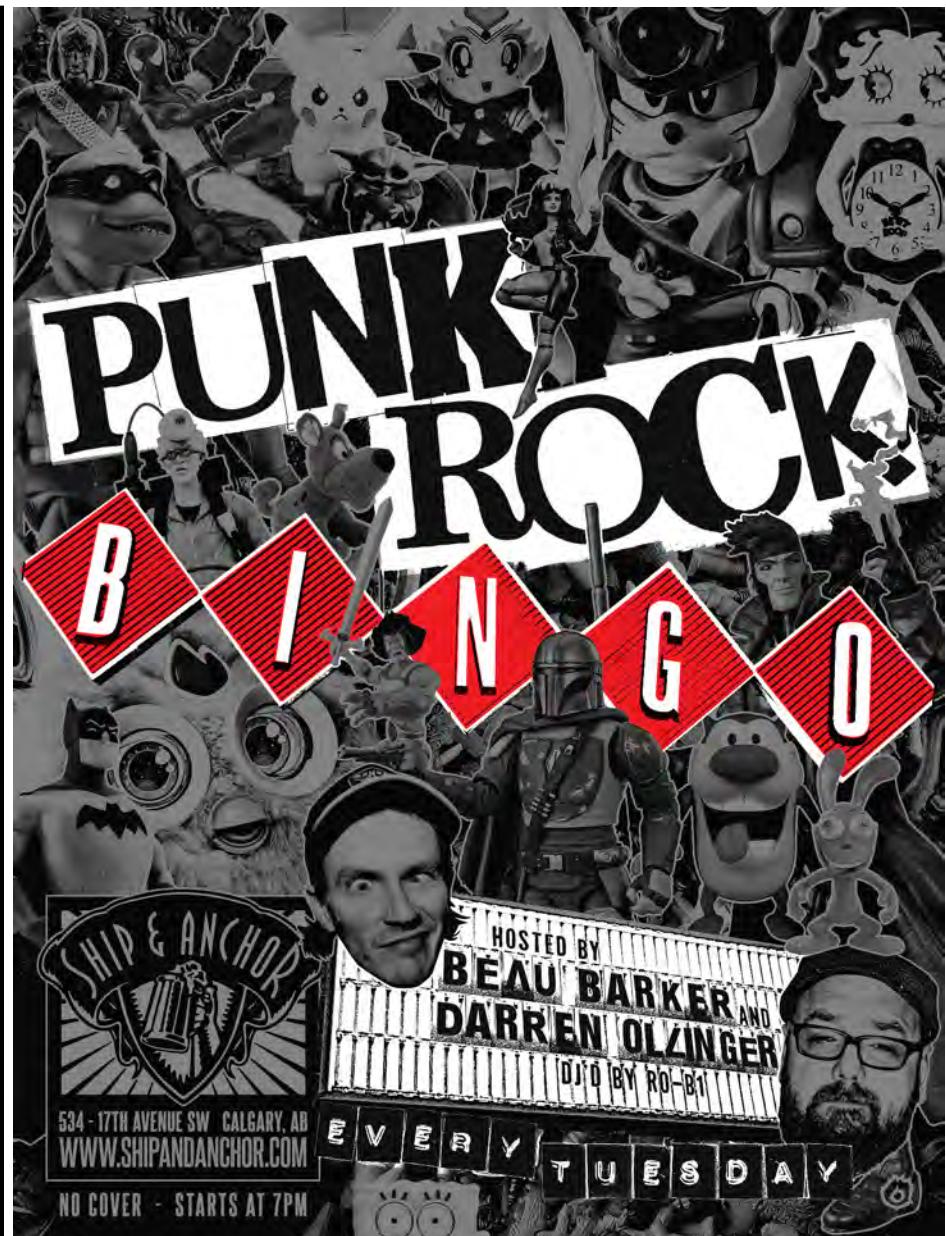
March 11, 2021
This book is at once a deeply personal collection of thoughts and testimonials about the challenges Craig has faced down and survived, a collection of amateur poetry worth a read in its own right, and a set of short questionnaires any trauma survivor will find useful as a way to begin their journey to recovery. Its sincerity



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HOLIDAY EDITION!

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HOLIDAY EDITION!

As the years pass, the trio is drawn into deepening mysteries. A local criminal known only as "The Dagger Man" has resumed activity in the area, and even more grisly discoveries are unearthed. In order to reconcile himself with the horrors he has experienced, Wilder writes. His need to chronicle the events of his life seems to be the only way he can properly process them, eventually leading to obsession—and not only his own. When his writing and notes are stolen, things take a turn for the truly bizarre. "Looking Glass Sound" is the fourth novel I have read from Catriona Ward. Each of her books manages to hold its own unique voice, with enough variety in story, style, and narrator that no one could call her work formulaic. Despite Ward's inventive mind, I found that this entry into her oeuvre fell somewhat flat. Metafiction is a tricky category, and with horror perhaps even more so. I found

myself engrossed as each chapter and each new point of view created multiple possible scenarios and questions in my mind. With all that build up, perhaps it was inevitable that the ending was bound to underwhelm.

Laura Phaneuf

TIMEQUAKE



Chris Lowder
Art by **Ian Kennedy, John Cooper, Alberto Salinas and Jesus Redondo**
July 23, 2022

The buzz is immense on this long-awaited graphic novel. I'm pleased to say the

buzz is more than justified!

Timequake originally appeared in short-lived but still much-missed 70s British comic called Starlord. When Starlord merged with 2000AD, another Timequake story drawn by the great Jesus Redondo followed. Hibernia comics have done the world a great service reprinting 'Timequake' for the first time. The reproduction of the artwork and layout of the book is very impressive.

Timequake tells the tale of a certain James Blocker who is 'recruited' for an organization called Time Control, who exist to prevent Timequakes: history-changing events like the Nazis winning World War 2.

It's capital sport to read, it's easy to see that it was written pre-'Watchmen' because it's so exciting and uplifting, it simply does what it says on the tin: no angst, no misery. Timequake harkens back to a happier time. I

love the black and white artwork within too. The artwork is a joy, as well as the aforementioned Redondo, there is fantastic art by John Cooper and the incomparable Ian Kennedy, and some lovely euro art by Salinas. Kudos for David at Hibernia for getting 'Timequake' back in print!

It's about time!
Steve Earles

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MOTÖRHEAD

Another Perfect Day

40th Anniversary Release

Always the most controversial album in Motörhead's catalogue, Another Perfect Day was up against it from the start. After former Thin Lizzy guitarist Brian Robertson replaced Fast Eddie Clarke, the band's sixth studio album presented what Lemmy called a more "musical" approach, the classic line-up's full-tilt ferocity harnessed to more traditional guitar rock tropes enhanced by carefully crafted production.

In 1983, it was initially startling to hear Lemmy and Phil's patent hell-bound express draped in Robbo's effects-laden multi-storey guitar overdubs instead of getting hot-wired by Eddie's deceptively complex thermonuclear blues riffs and embellishments.

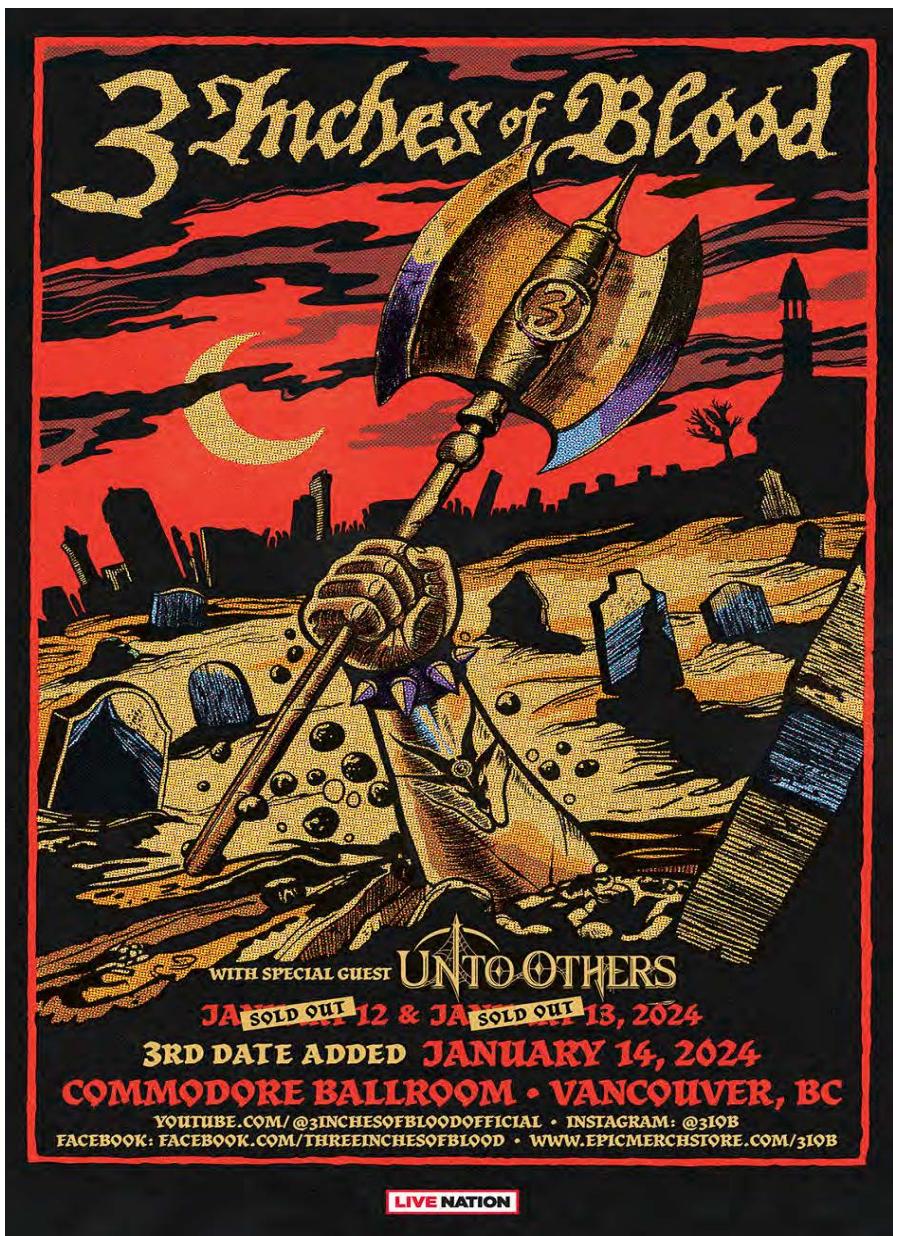
Following the likewise lambasted Iron Fist and its reappraisal, Another Perfect Day stands before us

forty years on from the turbulent time that spawned it as an inevitably divisive one-off chapter in Motörhead's chaotic early history.

To celebrate the 40th anniversary of this sixth record in the Motörhead album arsenal, it is being presented in new deluxe editions. There will be hardback book-packs in two CD and triple LP formats, featuring an amplifier blowing remaster of the original album, previously unreleased demo bonus tracks and a previously unreleased, full concert recorded at Hull City Hall on 22nd June 1983, plus the story of the album and many previously unseen photos. There's also a limited edition, blue and black swirl of the original standalone album.

Forty years on, Another Perfect Day holds its own as this most surreal detour in Motörhead's early roller coaster, deserving its reappraisal away from the heat of the moment when the classic lineup dissolved and Robbo joined the band.

imotorhead.com



11TH CALGARY UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL

Five Choice Picks

By Ryan Dyer

Documentary junkies were treated to five days of films at the 11th annual Calgary Underground Film Festival. Variety was on display in this edition, as with previous years, with music, cats and controversy being just a few of the topics in this year's selection. Here are five worth particular attention.

Sorry/Not Sorry

About the sexual misconduct of Louis C.K., Sorry/Not Sorry features interviews with the three women who came out against the comic, those who broke the story, and other comics giving their two cents on the situation. Sorry/Not Sorry answers several questions but raises many interesting ones regarding the case and the aftermath.

Cat Video Fest

Instead of laying on the bed scrolling through cat videos for an hour on your phone, doesn't watching an over 70 minute compilation of them at a cinema surrounded by other cat lovers sound like a better time? That's just what this was.

You Were My First Boyfriend

Self-healing through autobiographical film-

making seems to be a growing trend in cinema with You Were My First Boyfriend showcasing this in documentary form. Recreations of events from the filmmaker's life make vulnerable moments seem almost normal in the scope of the film. The scene in which a Tori Amos music video was recreated is unforgettable.

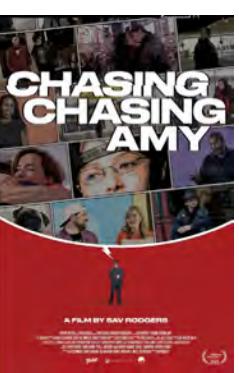
Boil Alert

Boil Alert is eye-opening in a few ways. First, to the ways the water systems for aboriginal communities in Canada have been polluted over the years and the effects made by this. Also, because there seems to be no stopping the higher-ups from doing it again. Shockingly, director Layla Staats was arrested for protesting against a pipeline being installed underneath a lake vital to a community's life. The message here, though, is it's vital to everyone's life.



Chasing Chasing Amy

Chasing Chasing Amy is another documentary that pushes the focus towards the filmmaker being the subject of the film. What started as a documentary meant to center around Chasing Amy's effect on the LGBTQ community turned, organically, into a film about growth, transformation, and the self-acceptance of director Sav Rodgers, with the actors of Chasing Amy as well as Kevin Smith himself going along for the ride.



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PESSIMYSTIC

Burnt Offering
Interview by Absolute Underground

AU: Welcome to Absolute Underground, thank you for taking the time to speak with us. For those unfamiliar with Pessimystic, what can tell us about this trio?

Pessimystic: Thank you for having us. We are a blackened death metal band from Ontario/Quebec. We've been playing as a trio for about a year. Our sound focuses on experimental and dissonant riffs, dark atmospheres, and lucid melodic sections.

AU: You just unleashed your debut record "Burnt Offering", what can you tell our readers about it?

PMYS: Burnt Offering is the culmination of our first year of songwriting. The overall themes of the record are theosophical in nature, and we believe that it provides a unique sonic experience to support our message. We welcome the listener to interpret our musical compositions and lyrical concepts however they will.



AU: You've stated that you wanted to keep your identities minimal and the music at the forefront, what can you tell us about this shroud of mystery from the band?

PMYS: It's not about anonymity or secrecy as much as it's about letting the music do the talking. We represent Pessimystic in a way that separates it, as an entity of its own, from the personalities and ideologies of its members.

AU: What inspired the band to write an album "that contemplates divine retribution and conjures the apocalyptic imagery enshrined in the human psyche."?

PMYS: The answer is in the question. There are undeniable spiritual faculties of the mind. To me, this is an unceasing spring of inspiration in itself. Our music and lyrics are influenced by the prophets and apocalyptic literature.

AU: How was it working with a legend like producer Topon Das at Apt 2 Recording (Fuck the Facts, Deformatory, Eclipsed)?

PMYS: Apartment 2 is the most comfortable environment to record an album. There is nobody I would rather have in the captain's chair than Topon.

AU: You stated that you have more music ready and plan to release more EPs and Albums every year. How many more are in the pipeline?

PMYS: It is our goal to create the purest form of our vision, so we are always writing music. There is another small batch of songs ready to go and many more ideas to be materialized in the coming months. We like EPs and shorter albums for now, it's not that we put a limit on time or number of songs on an album, but we like to think of them as chapters that capture a state of mind.

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PUNK ROCK PASTRIES

Have a Hollie Jolly Christmas at Punk Rock Pastries

5548 Hastings St.

Burnaby, British Columbia

Interview with Founder Hollie Fraser

By Billy Hopeless

Halo Hollie daze everyone, what a season to be trying to keep the weight off for touring next year especially, when you've got punk rock pastries baking up the coolest sweets in town. Hollie opened her shop back in 2019 and it's been an endless source of amazing top-quality yumlicious goodness stirring up the city ever since. Recently Hollie won her second Halloween bake-off on the food network so as I used stopping in to congratulate her as an excuse to have a few cheat days I also decided to interview her and help spread the word that Punk rock pastries is the best bake shop ever so let's all sink our teeth into Punk Rock Pastries!

Billy Hopeless: Well, deck my halls Hollie after all these years I'm finally interviewing you! Well let's get this sack of icing sugar open and this rockin rolling pin rolling. How and why did you come from Australia to open up Canada's coolest bakery, Punk Rock Pastries? Was it on a sleigh pulled by Six white boomers?

Hollie Fraser: Nargh mate it was the dingos, they stole me and brought me here. But in all seriousness, I came here 12 years ago on a working visa. I was working as a pastry chef helping other people open fine dining restaurants and after my first year of being here, I met my now husband and I opened PRP. At the time I was working for another company but was so annoyed with running other people's businesses that I said fuck it and opened Punk Rock Pastries. One year later we had the store front up and running.

BH: When did you first fall in love with baking? Did little Hollie ever have an Easy Bake Oven, or did you step right up to the adult model?

HF: I didn't have an Easy Bake Oven; I had a real oven. My dad owned a bakery when I was little, so I grew up with flour and sugar in my veins, and by the age of five my dad had me piping royal icing. I've worked in the industry for 22 years. I became a sous chef at age 21 and a head chef at 25, and so on and so on. I've worked in fancy high-end hotels, to family run bakeries, but nothing as cool and fun as Punk Rock Pastries.

BH: Ah, Visions of sugar plums dancing in your head, eh? What are some of the wildest, most popular and seasonal sweet treats folk love to eat that can't be beat from punk rock pastries?

HF: Some of our holiday favourites are our Dead Fred cookies: voodoo inspired gingerbread men topped with our house made marshmallow fondant. Or our buddy's breakfast: Marble cake stuffed with vanilla custard, topped with candy, Oreos, gingerbread crumbs and maple caramel. It's the sugar coma of desserts.



HOPELESSLY DEVOTED TO YOU

The Black Balos. But seriously the list goes on, and we like to add tunes weekly.

BH: I think my heart just grew three sizes today. Say let's play Who's who in Hollies Whoville? Tell us about your crew and what's each of their reindeer or special-saint nicknames?

HF: Jenn is our Cookie Master, all the amazing cookies you see at punk rock pastries are decorated by her! Her reindeer name would have to be Jinny Jingles. Her favourite drink is gin and she's always laughing.

Alicia is our Head Baker, she brings her flare of flavors to PRP, Her reindeer name would have to be Baylish Bambi. Baileys is her Christmas drink and Bambi is her nickname

Elise is our brains of PRP. She does promotions, events, and helps me when I'm having a midlife meltdown, her nickname would be Snacker. Seriously, every time I see her, she's eating something.

Jess is our new baker, she's always happy and giggling at something and has a mild obsession with Ryan Reynolds. So her nickname would have to be Gigglegal.

Amber is our front of house master. She's the one who greets you when you come in to PRP. She's also helped me organize the bakery and make it run so much better. She's also part of the organization The Real Hot Skate Moms. Her nickname would have to be Kick-Flip because she's helped me flip this place around.

BH: Have you had any brushes and gushes with celebrity greatness of film, television, music or other arts?



HF: We have done a ton of things for film. We did the two Monster High Movies, Animal Control, Turner and Hooch, and a bunch more. I've also gotten to make a lot of celebrity birthday cakes, from Joel McHale to Freddie Highmore. For bands, we have made cookies for NOFX, the Voodoo Glow Skulls, Alice Cooper's band, Coldplay, The Descendents and even got to make Stacy D's birthday cake and give it to her on stage when she was playing with Me First and the Gimme Gimmies.

BH: Before we wrap this up let's put the icing on this Christmas cake won't you give all the fruits and nuts reading this Ho Ho Hopeless Christmas column a Christmas message from punk rock pastries won't cha?

HF: If you want to do anything nice this Christmas, go support a small business like your local record store or (hint-hint) a local bakery. Damn the man! Fuck the big-ass corporate stores and save the small guys from going under! Remember every time you buy from a small business, they do a little dance! Make them dance this Christmas! Also, its punk to be kind so don't be a dick. punkrockpastries.com

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HOME FRONT

Interview with Graeme McKinnon

By Billy Hopeless

Billy Hopeless: My dear Graeme, it has been years since we last conversed. I hope this letter finds you well. From our first meeting back in the Wednesday Night Heroes to when you eased on down the road with the Posi-core Wiz Kids (never forgotten for the tribute to Vancouver's 99 cent pizza entitled "A Slice of Life") to now where I've found you going postal punk with the amazing band Home Front. How have you been and tell us how did you get from there to here?

GM: Good evening, Billy. It has been a very long time since we last spoke. Very happy to hear from you. Word on the streets is you got The Black Halos back together and are back on the road, kicking ass and taking names...so I have no doubt we'll cross paths again.

Wednesday Night Heroes finished in 2008 and from there I started a hardcore punk band No Problem, who released a few records on Deranged Records and toured Europe and the USA a few times. During the pandemic, No Problem sort of went on hiatus with members going through some big life changes like marriage and children etc.

Enter Clint Frazier.

An old pal and amazing drummer who played in Edmonton bands like The Franklins, Dancefloor Disasters and his live electronic group Shout Out Out Out Out. He was between projects and reached out to see if I'd be interested in starting a more studio, synth based project with him. Once we laid down some Blitz inspired riffs, we added some synths and drum machines and viola! Home Front was born, and it was a nice studio project to burn through the pandemic. It's crazy to think how it has blossomed into a touring live band with Warren Oostlander (No Problem) and Brandi Strauss and Ian Rowley (Rythm Of Cruelty), didn't think we'd get further than the first few demos.

BH: There have been many great writers from Edmonton such as yourself, Gregg Huff, Chi Pig and the Cleats. Why do you think Edmonton spawns such great lyrical writers?

GM: Thank you very much for even putting me in the same league as those true legends. Honestly, I think people from our neck of the woods just have a unique take on the world. Not sure if it's because we're isolated, or from the north or from a city most people couldn't find on a map,

but I think being left alone allows us a little freedom to talk about the world through our lens.

If you've ever met someone from Edmonton, I think most people immediately recognize our twisted sense of humour. I think up here we like to talk a lot of trash with a heavy dose of sarcasm, it's how we communicate, so when I approach lyrics, there's lots of brutal honesty hidden

beneath the surface. You might have to listen a few times but it's there and in time reveals itself to the listener. I like to think Chi Pig, Huff & Kozub offer the same gems in their words. Essentially there's a humanity under it all. We're all hugely flawed, but I think that's what makes us unique and ultimately human.

BH: When I first heard Home Front I was told some hoesweren't as impressed as I was, and calling you down as a sell-out for taking this brave new route. I can honestly say this statement was proven true as I tried to find a copy, and at every record store I asked when I was out on tour, every store sold out of the album. Congratulations on your success, how does it feel to have sold out?

GM: I'm writing the replies to this interview from my job's control room on the night shift (it's freezing outside and I'm on no sleep) So I'll let you know how good selling out is when my limousine picks me up and drops me off at the right place.

BH: Ok now let's take a short break from the GM and Home Frontman, why don't you tell us who else is in the unit and in two words or less tell us what each one brings to the band.

Clint Frazier- Technical Wizard

Warren Oostlander- Savage Beat

Brandi Strauss- Low End Queen

Ian Rowley- Noise Maker

BH: Total beauty team. Soups on eh! Personally, I'd describe the band's concoction

as an exciting, interesting, fresh, and original pressure cooker. Mixing ingredients of Joy Division, London's Suede, and The Cure, with a hearty broth of punk attitude. Then add on The Jam. How do you describe your creation?

GM: Well, there's a little bit of Oi! & a healthy dose of Punk in our Northern Synth Gumbo. You've heard of shoe gaze, well, Home Front stamps on them hush puppies...this is Boot Gaze.

I think back to the first time I heard Second Empire Justice by Blitz, I hated it with a passion, but over time-somehow the tunes and the cold production really started to speak to me. Same record, same songs, but somehow my tastes started to evolve.

Even tunes like "Women in Disguise" by the Upstarts or "Out On an Island" by Cocksparrer all have these wonderful melodies across mid 80s production and have their place in my imagination. It's very niche, but feels like a good jumping off point. But you nailed it, The Jam are master chefs and albums like Setting Sons really show you how to get it done.

BH: Like I said though it's so chunky you'll want to use a fork, and then use a spoon because you'll want to get every drop! You just got back from touring Europe. How was your adventure, and what were your favourite places, sights, and/or experiences that you've brought home in your carry-on memories?

HOPELESSLY DEVOTED TO YOU

GM: I was blown away by the response Home Front received overseas. It was nuts. People knew the words and sang their hearts out...it was so humbling. The one thing with Home Front is we have a lot of good people in our corner to help us: Paco from our record label La Vida Es Un Mus busted his ass to make sure we were always sorted, my partner in crime Kate Suter documented all the shows and made us look pretty damn good. Also, our drivers Josh (and his dog Puffin) in the UK, and our man from Munich, Michl who went above and beyond the call of duty- by both managing our asses and keeping us on track even when drunken lunatics drove scooters into the side of our van.

BH: Well, there's no place like Home Front for the Holidays and that reminds me this is my Holiday special, so we better get this Christmas cracker cracking. Now you've always had a good sense of humor so let's grab and end and pull. Can you tell us a silly joke we'd find inside along with our paper crown?

GM: I have this long-time irrational fear of opening my party popper and it says the Steve Martin classic: "If I wanted a joke, I'd follow you into the John and watch you take a leak..."

BH: HA HA HA and Ho Ho Ho, I'm still living here in the Wet Christmas west coast so tell me what's Christmas like on the Homefront of God rest ye merry Edmonton?

GM: Well, it's weird so far, as it's December and there's fuck all for snow...I know it's coming, but man, I've never experienced this in my life. Cold and no snow is just weird.

BH: Well, thank you for coming back into my heart and home this year and giving me the present of new music that keeps me from becoming an old humbug geezer Ebenezer. What can we expect in the new year and near future from Home Front?

GM: We have quite a few more tours planned, and Clint and I have begun writing new music. So, if all goes well we will have a new album ready for



'25-'26.

BH: Ah yes, may it be a bright future. Where can people find your merch and music? Oh PS to anyone reading this, I'd really dig a Home Front t-shirt for Christmas.

GM: Our music and merch can be found on our bandcamp arewenothomefront.bandcamp.com or the worldwide HQ lavidaesunmus.bandcamp.com

And yes, Billy, if you're good boy and don't jack off the microphone too violently on stage...you will get one of our leftovers from our tour in California. Miss you.

With love, Graeme.

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Suicide Silence, Chelsea Grin, I AM

PeelingFlesh

November 4, Macewan Hall Ballroom, Calgary AB

Suicide Silence and Chelsea Grin, two of deathcore's originators, decided to team up for a co-headlining tour which brought them across the states and into Canada for a couple of dates. As the show was held at my University, I felt it would be more fitting to do a critical analysis type of take of the show. I had some questions in mind before going - what value do Suicide Silence hold in 2023? Does their current vocalist Eddie have an equal stage presence to Mitch Lucker? What type of crowd does SS attract in 2023? Will the band ignore their maligned self-titled album? How much of the set will revolve around old songs?

First, though, the new blood took the stage in the form of PeelingFlesh. PeelingFlesh combined deathcore with some streetwise rap samples. The combination works, as deathcore breakdowns are similar to some heavy rap beats - though after the initial welcome wore off, the band's songs, structurally, all felt too similar to one another. Still, it was a style that had hardcore dancers showing off their best moves early in the evening.

Next up, I AM are a Texan band who look and do sound like a Texan band - like Pantera had sons who were teenagers during deathcore's peak. Along with the breakdown tropes, the band integrated some Slayer-sounding riffs and even covered the legendary "Domination" breakdown, solidifying their

connection to the cowboys. I always thought Chelsea Grin's sound was too formulaic and that their songwriting wasn't as engaging as the other bands in the genre. Live, it does work well, and they play their meat and potatoes style of deathcore nearly effortlessly - all in a day's work I guess. Stage antics-wise, there isn't much movement from the members aside from current vocalist Tom Barber,

who is charismatic in his own way. The set was loaded with older numbers - showing that Grin and later Suicide Silence took this tour as an opportunity to give the fans an experience like it was 2010 all over again. Now, to address the Suicide Silence questions. It's a bit funny how their guitarist Chris Garza is such a fan of nu metal, because their career now reminds me of Korn's. After Mitch's passing, they went through a lull period and lost a lot of momentum, a bit like Korn when they put out *See You on the Other Side* and *Untitled*. Korn then went back to their roots with *Korn III*, and SS feel a bit like that now. Their set opened with "Unanswered," a song that like Korn's "Blind," ignited their rise to underground stardom. They continued with a barrage of older tracks, including "You Only Live Once" and a few choices from *No Time To Bleed*. Aside from a couple of newer songs (none from the self-titled album), the set mostly revolved around what originally brought them to the table. While the new songs were received well, they don't generate a response equal to the older ones. The band itself sounded as they should, and current vocalist Eddie Hermida, now having had lots of practice to sing those Lucker songs, sang them pretty much spot on. Still, aesthetically, Mitch made the band more marketable and on stage he had a presence that is impossible to replicate, but that is in the past.

What type of fans were there? Well,

compared to Warped Tour, in which every

third person had heavily hair-sprayed scene hair, the crowd was diverse, with oldheads with stretched ears from 15 years ago, hardcore kids with ski masks and even the odd person in a death metal shirt. What value does the band hold in 2023? Macewan Hall Ballroom is not one of the biggest venues in the city, though the show they put on was worthy of a bigger stage. The band at this moment is in a good place, with deathcore having its second wave due to bands like Lorna Shore and with people feeling nostalgia over Suicide Silence's songs. Just like with Korn, bands like Linkin Park surpassed them in popularity, though they persisted and are now at another career peak. If Suicide Silence keeps up the good work, they will see their status and value rise in the upcoming years and the next time they come back to town, it will be in a larger venue.

- Ryan Dyer

Skinny Puppy, Lead Into Gold

November 19, Grey Eagle Events Centre, Calgary AB

For a band like Skinny Puppy, a tour touted as their final one had a lot to live up to - especially as it was many concert goers, with myself included, first and last time seeing the band in person. The result was certainly one for the ages, with a few moments of sadness sprinkled in like brain confetti. As Calgary, Alberta is the hometown of vocalist Nivek Ogre, it was fitting for the band to finally include a Calgary date in their schedule. Those who had been waiting years to finally see the band agreed that the wait was indeed worth it, with the band giving a presentation featuring songs from their entire catalogue during the alien story which took up the majority of the show and an encore which featured the band's timeless classics "Smothered Hope" and "Assimilate" (which Ogre dedicated to his brother who lives in the city).

The Grey Eagle Events Centre was modified a bit for this concert, and for the better. Black curtains were put on either side of the stage to make the floor area for the concert smaller, thus making it more intimate than the usual shows that happen there.

Paul Barker's Lead into Gold opened. A two-man affair, Barker's thick bass grooves and industrial soundscapes mixed with his

distinct voice brought me back to those days watching Ministry's *Sphinctour* DVD and seeing him thrash around on his back during "Lava." The musician was in his moment, surrounded by big screens, trippy visuals and appreciative fans. "You're a fucking legend!" someone shouted. Barker smiled in return, finished his set and told the people to get ready for Skinny Puppy. The drama begins with "VX Gas Attack." Ogre emerges behind a shroud as a silhouette, which is typical of the group's concerts - it creates a sense of intrigue - what will he be wearing? This time, there are two extra limbs aiding him, making him look like a centipede at times, holding shadow puppet guns and items of iconography.

During "Rodent," Ogre comes out from behind the shroud, his "otherness" represented here as being completely covered in a hood - his head enlarged, like the Elephant Man. Another man on stage, the Tormentor, representing doubt, fear, wonder and aggression towards "the other" systematically attacks Ogre from now until the end of the concert. During the song "Tormentor," he zaps Ogre with a prod - the lyrics "mental shock" are literal here, and sympathy for the alien is felt from the audience.

Finally, the moment of truth - the Tormentor rips away Ogre's veil and the alien, the ultimate symbol of the "other" is revealed. The mask has a mechanism to control the lights in the eyes which flash different shades during the performance. The band kick into "Human Disease" with the fitting lyric "malformed earthborn."

The band play their harsher songs. "Hardset Head," and especially "Pedafly" hitting like a sack of bricks - the Tormentor continues to taunt Ogre and places an oxygen mask on him during the song's finale, slits his throat, blood shooting into the security guards in front of them (they were so close, why didn't they help him?).

During "Morpheus Laughing" it feels as though the alien has the upper hand, condemning the rotten world it has become a part of. Morpheus might be laughing, but the Tormentor has the last laugh as he straps the alien into a chair during "The Choke." A hospital shroud is pulled in front of Ogre

as he is beaten to a pulp behind it and the crowd awaits the result.

When Ogre is revealed after this beating, his head has been gashed open. "Worlock" is played with the lyric "a view so cruel" taking on a new meaning as Ogre's stringy alien pulp starts to fall out of his head. It doesn't matter what costume is worn when this song is played, its otherworldly appeal stays consistent - though lyrically, it matches perfectly with this portion of the drama. Finally, "Dig It" seals the alien's fate with a noose being tied around his neck and finally being pulled off stage. It is a tragic ending to the story, but not the end of the concert. Concerning the message Skinny Puppy was trying to convey during the presentation - being an "other" you are likely to be shunned, taken advantage of and abused by those around you - you have to take control of your situation and fight out of it if you want to live. Skinny Puppy's choice of song order, with the lyrics matching the progression of the alien's troubles, was a thing of genius - not to mention the song choices themselves were all exceptional in their own right.

The encore was indeed bittersweet, with the mask-less Ogre seeming especially jovial playing in Calgary - swinging his microphone around, smiling and telling the audience what school he went to. When "Assimilate" ended and he waved goodbye and left the stage for the last time, this real moment felt sadder than what the alien story conveyed.

-Ryan Dyer

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Absolute Live



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Absolute Movie Reviews

PLAN 9 FROM ALIEXPRESS

Directed by Diana Galimzyanova

4 Stars out of 5

When I heard about the Russian-made experimental film titled Plan 9 from Aliexpress, I couldn't help but wonder if it's a parody of the online Chinese retail giant. Instead, it's a very absurd cum fantasy I'm sure fans of Monty Python would love. According to seasoned filmmaker Diana Galimzyanova, her work is a trash comedy, and it contains some dark elements to it. In the official story synopsis: "When an unstable Gothic Princess (alternatively played by Ekaterina Dar, Elizaveta Shulyak and Lilit Karapetyan) wants to kill herself Prince charming (Anton Medov) steals her rope, she must find him to get her rope back and commit suicide."

And when she can't locate this lad, that's when she meets a baffling list of not so normal fantastical creatures. Some of them help her, and others try to hinder this lass' efforts. One of which is a zombie unicorn! These beasts are not meant to be CGI perfect or look real. Instead, it's like this filmmaker got Moscow's cosplayers together, gave them a budget to spend on their costumes, and then display their efforts for all to see. When half the film involves them doing little creative skits on an outdoor stage, I couldn't help but think they're buskers.

The best part of this experimental work is that she also shows how well she knows the history of cinema. The way this work trapezes through the eras, ranging from the classic silent film to modern is rather wicked, and when they come complete with an age-appropriate soundtrack, I couldn't help but want to swing to the ragtime scores as well. But the best part includes how all this transitions to acknowledging the

video-game world as well. That's because there are a few Street Fighter type moments to go with the presentation.

Galimzyanova's film is very DIY, and is intentionally made to resemble a fan film. I'm fairly sure half the equipment is what one can rent from a film society, and along with a few iphones and other high tech gadgets, what's made goes beyond what one would watch from a sketch comedy show. When compared to her really artistic works, this one is different. And to be fair, it's best to check out her versatility with the shorts that's on her YouTube page at and as for what she has in store next, it's best to follow her on social media, like at <https://www.instagram.com/paakojsimpson/>

Ed Sum

GALE, STAY AWAY FROM OZ

Directed by Daniel Alexander

Available on Chilling Streaming Service

5 Stars out of 5

Frank Baum's books about the fantasy world of Oz have never been cause for concern amongst those familiar with the entire series. After watching the horror film, simply titled Gale, Stay Away From Oz, I have to watch Return to Oz (1985) again to refresh my memory. It seems this short is clearly influenced by it along with the books. The story here concerns how insanity has affected the Gale family.



Just when fans of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's film Wizard of Oz thought that film was the end all be all, there's been attempts to continue the story with Journey Back to Oz, produced by Filmation, but it largely

lays forgotten when compared to other attempts by the House of Mouse, which includes Oz, The Great and Powerful, along with other studios's interpretation.

Fans of the books know the author also included scarier elements later on in the series. As for which work made Daniel Alexander reimagine this world to a product of true nightmares, I'm glad he's taking a chance.

This short film goes full on Lovecraft. Emily (Chloë Crump) investigates the mystery about why her grandmother (Karen Swan) is what she is. She's totally lost it since coming home. That is, all she remembers from her whirlwind experience is those red shoes and the wicked witch. Maybe she should've kept her adventure to herself, but eventually, she told her family and when it became too much, maybe sent her to an asylum. When she grew older, it was changed to a nursing home.

Gale, Stay Away From Oz is an amazing watch on its take on what happened to Dorothy after she's come home. This work feels like a proof of concept on what can be done should filmmakers approach the world by revealing the terrors who have finally taken over Oz. With no surprise, it involves the Nome King and I really shouldn't say any more.

Unlike other adaptations which are very low-fi and suffer from a not-so-creative vision, this presentation is willing to leave viewers like me feeling worried for our hero. Hopefully more will be made, as the narrative goes beyond the cinematic adaptation most people know. This one feels like it recognises elements from the other books too!

Ed Sum

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Absolute Album Reviews

Demo 2023 – Bogside Sniper Squadron

During my usual musical escapades I happened to come upon "Bogside Sniper Squadron"! They released the demo I found in 2023 and it is simply titled "Demo 2023". It boasts itself as being a fusion of death metal and black metal and was uploaded and released by Headsplit Records!

First off I need to say the sound is exceedingly "old-school". It sounds like something that came fresh out of the 80's or very early 90's! The guitar tone is very treble (which is common with a lot of black metal). The vocals are tight and on point and the drums are a frenzied mix of forward driving and blasting. I will also add that some of the lead guitar work is exceptional!

Featuring 4 tracks in just under 15 minutes this is a quicker one—but it is long enough to get a full on earful of what is offered by the band. By that I mean that even though it is not lengthy it is just long enough to feel like it is a substantial release!

The cover art is exceedingly simple and "basic"...but honestly I dig it! It gives off an extreme D.I.Y. vibe and that is something that I consider to be a good thing most times. Not overproduced yet not under-done either!

To finish off I will just say that although I have heard of Headsplit Records I don't know much about them. But if Headsplit is spewing out stuff like this I can make a stab that they probably have a lot of good stuff to offer! So dig in deep and hit up YouTube (or Bandcamp) and give these guys a spin! Or if you want to be a genuine G head on over to Headsplit and order yourself a copy!

Devin J. Meaney

A Retrospective of Abusive Disfigurements – Cystic Hygroma

Once again I was feeling like a blast of gorenoise so I made my way to YouTube to see what I could find. The first release I clicked on was "A Retrospective of Abusive Disfigurements" by Cystic Hygroma! I won't lie—I was drawn to this one by the cover alone—but after listening I can state that this was quite the solid little blast of gurgles and audio warfare!

This EP was released in 2023. The guitars are low in the recording and aren't much more than a fuzz—so I can say it is the percussion that takes the lead on this one. The drum machine sounds like it could be a machine gun or a well-tuned jack hammer! The fuzz of the guitar paired with the machine blasts and rampant gurgles makes for an intense "anti-musical" onslaught that could be described as "ear torture"—if torture was something that can be solidly enjoyed!

It states in the YouTube bio that this is a one man band hailing from France! Yet again the Gore Grinder account has presented us with something exceptional—so check out Cystic Hygroma and anything else that the Gore Grinder account has to offer!

Devin J. Meaney

Flax – Scraping the Rind

At just after 2 in the morning sleep was escaping me—so I made my way to YouTube to see what kind of gory delights I could find! After a quick search I found "Scraping the Rind" by the fresh one man gore slam act "Flax"! The YouTube bio just stated simply that this is a one man band from a guy named Tom from Wales, UK! The project was newly started in 2023 and this is Tom's very first full length release!

The vocals are a mix of pitched gurgles and "slammy" gutturals (there are some high "shrieks" too!). The guitar work is tight—with deep chugs galore! Strangely enough for me personally I think it is the drum machine that makes this unique. Some very strange percussion can be heard while listening to this—and that paired with the guitar chugs and the vocals makes for a listen that is highly pleasant to the ear drums. I am reminded of some of the work done by CXRX's Clay Lamanske!

You can check this out on YouTube or Flax's Bandcamp page! If you want to acquire a physical copy you can do so by getting in touch with Disturbed Mind Records!

All in all this was a pretty good gory and entirely slam-tacular release! I have heard better—but not recently. I won't rate this out of ten—but I can say one thing for sure...it is up there!

Note: Tom used one of the same samples as Impetigo used on their track "I Work for the Streetcleaner" from their "Horror of the Zombies" album!

Devin J. Meaney

It's Good for Your Health - Fumier

After some intense searching—I have pretty much depleted most of the good gorenoise from YouTube it seems—I came to "It's good for your health" by Fumier! Fumier is a Canadian gorenoise project and this is my first time giving them a listen!

It states on YouTube that this is a two piece! 7 tracks in under 4 minutes makes this a short listen—but as a lot of gorenoise releases are uber short this is entirely acceptable. There is just enough here to make you put your head in your hands and say "WTF?"

"Ping ping" jackhammer percussion and splattery and obscurely obnoxious vocals paired with blur riffs and sludgy tones makes for your standard noisy listen. With that said—this is done well and I'd like to hear more from the project!

There is no bio to speak of aside from the "names" of the artists involved. But this was uploaded by the "Sickphoque" account on YouTube that I am just hearing of. So if you have any interest just give this a listen on YouTube and give that account a view!

PS: The cover amuses me!

Devin J. Meaney

Stages of Putrefaction - Gorebones

Yet again on one of my whimsical adventures through YouTube's underbelly I found another solid piece of gorenoise! "Stages of Putrefaction" by Gorebones is

something to throw on at Thanksgiving or Christmas

when your grandmother is getting ready to chow down on a feast of turkey and stuffing—well no—not really—but it for sure is something that peaked my interest! This is splattery and gurgling just how I like it! At times the percussion can be a bit repetitive—but that is the only negative thing I have to say. Otherwise this is a genuinely noxious blast of noise and gore! The vocals are straight out of the sewer and the guitars—very lo-fi—chug on with a blatant disregard for my bedroom's usually quiet and peaceful ambience! There is no bio on YouTube to speak of—but there is a link to a label called "Bed Noise Room Records"—so if you dig what you hear give them a view! This one is for fans of the rawest gore only—so if you're expecting something even slightly melodic steer clear!

Devin J. Meaney

Grundle - Demo 2023

Before sitting down to write this I thought to myself "Hey! Right now would be a good time to listen to some gorenoise!" After a brief search I came to Demo 2023 by "Grundle"! The first thing I have to say is that I am highly reminded of the "more serious" band Lurid Panacea! The drums are almost exactly the same and the production quality is intensely similar!

Gurgling vocals pair with blistering guitars and frantic percussion to make for a listen that can only be described as "pleasurable ear abuse"! It states on YouTube that this is a "Two-piece gorenoise band from Dayton, Ohio, USA with members of Moiscus". This is their second demo and it also states that the drums are not programmed—which is sometimes rare for the blurrier gorenoise releases that usually chill somewhere beneath the moist underbelly of the interwebs!

This demo is less than four minutes long! But god damn is it an earfull! Check it out if you dig the noisier stuff!

Devin J. Meaney

Shitmist - Demo 2023

After listening to a short demo by Grundle I was linked to a release from the Serbia based gorenoise project "Shitmist"! This demo was less than a minute in length so I figured "What the hell? What could it hurt to listen to it?" After throwing it on I got a solid chuckle at the absolute absurdity of this but honestly it was enjoyable! My only negative comment is that I wish this was longer!

The main thing I have to say is this reminds me highly of the work done by James Tarr (R.I.P.)—his projects Elephant Man Behind the Sun and Submersed Cadaver sometimes had a similar sound and vibe so the biggest inspiration I drew from this demo was the desire to listen to some of James's work. He passed years back and I kind of wish he was still around. He truly was a gorenoise legend and a king within the underground!

Again—this was under a minute so if you want your eardrums to be violated for literally seconds give this a listen. But I will throw this out there that unless you have interest in the murkier and "dirtier" sounding gorenoise/noiscore this probably isn't the "release" for you!

Devin J. Meaney

Demo 2023 – Hear It!

Once again I was feeling the need to consume some punk rock. Also—as usual for my recent music adventures I wasn't feeling like listening to a full length album. I typed "Punk Rock Demo 2023" into the YouTube search bar and after a brief search I came upon Demo 2023 from the

band Hear It!

First and foremost I need to say that I love the guitar tone. It reminds me of something you would hear from one of the early Punk-o-rama albums. Also—aside from the vocals I am reminded of early "The Offspring". When it comes to the vocals they are very simplistic and "bursting" and they give off a Discharge vibe! The drums are pretty damn tight too!

This was release number 5 from "Death Breath Records"...I have never heard of this label but if this is the kind of stuff they are putting out I would happily support them with their future (and current) endeavors! The upload of this I found was on the Felopunk account on YouTube. I have definitely listened to my fair share of tunes from this account—and once again they seem to have offered something pretty rad with this one!

And hey! This is from Indonesia! I don't know too much about Indonesian punk—but this kills it! Give it a listen eh?

Devin J. Meaney

Sons of Northern Darkness - Immortal

Wanting to listen to some black metal, I made my way to YouTube to see what the underbelly of the interwebs had to offer. I scrolled through a handful of bands, and most of them I figured seemed "too dark" for my current mood and mindset. Eventually, I came to Immortal's "Sons of Northern Darkness"! Even though I have been listening to black metal for years, I never did get into Immortal. I mean, I have listened to them a handful of times in the past, but I never "fan girled" for them, if you know what I mean. With that said, the cover art was appealing, and after listening I can state that the vibes were perfect, and overall this album was just what the doctor ordered!

The guitar work is cold and atmospheric, the percussion is steady-fast and pummeling, and the vocals have the perfect rasp. My only "regret" is that I didn't pray for snow, as listening during a blizzard would have been perfect!

Again, I don't know as much about Immortal as I probably should as a black metal fan, but this is their 2002 offering. I know they have loads more material, so after I listen to this album a few times I will for sure be looking into more from the band. If you haven't listened to Immortal, if you are a fan of BM I think that you should. I have no reason/excuse for not getting into them sooner, and if I could go back in time—I wouldn't change a thing, because if I did, this first "full" listen probably wouldn't feel as damn epic!

Devin J. Meaney

Bone Pit - Impest

I have just been getting into the releases from Headsplit Records! I listened to a few of their offerings recently—and following that habit today I came upon "Bone Pit" by Impest! As soon as I clicked play I knew that it would be well worth it giving these guys a listen. Right from the beginning the guitar tone was eerie and atmospherically exceptional!

This demo only has three tracks that conclude at just over 12 minutes. This is ok though as anyone that checks out my writings knows that I am a fan of shorter releases. There is just enough here to send you into a frenzy of head banging and pure underground revelry and worship! The guitars are great—crunchy and deep! The drums are pin tight—and the vocals are deep and guttural reminding me of CC's former vocalist Chris Barnes (but tighter)! Overall everything meshes together to make for a listen that is pleasurable to the eardrums and infectious in the sense that after listening you want to listen again!

This was released on cassette! So snag yourself a copy—or check it out on YouTube like I did! Bands like this need your support...and I'd suggest that you give it to them!

Devin J. Meaney

Mauled and Liquified – Liquidyng

"Mauled and Liquified" by Liquidyng! Yet again this is another (extremely) short blast of nefariously pungent gorenoise! With vocals that are watery and "toilet-bowl-esque" paired with simple drum machine driving this is pretty cool! There is not much to say aside from that fact that only fans of the dingiest gore will dig this one! To most people it would just be a wall of headaches—but for those of us that "get it" this provides a nice little listen or three! The fact that I couldn't find the cover art on Google proves the absolute obscurity of this!

This is available on YouTube and is brought to us by Sewer Extract Records.

You can also check it out on Bandcamp! Featuring 6 short tracks in under 2 minutes I won't waste any more words...just go

listen to it ok?

Devin J. Meaney

Demo 2023 – Maggotized Vertebrae

Feeling like a blast of the gurgly stuff I came upon "Demo 2023" by Maggotized Vertebrae! This is an exceptionally short a primitive release so I won't go into too much detail—but it is for sure the kind of gore/noise that I like! Splashing gurgling toilet bowl vocals over a wall of noise and "feedback-esque" guitar work paired with the ambience of a chainsaw splatter party always make for a fun time—or at least it does for those of us that dig the noise! Fans of Elephant Man Behind the Sun and Submersed Cadaver are sure to revel in these offerings!

It states on YouTube that this is a "Fresh two-piece gorenoise band from USA with members of Sulfuric Cautery and Necropsy Odor". It was released on a handful of labels so check it out—and as always—stay gory!

Devin J. Meaney

Nuclear Assault - Radiation Sickness

Cherry Red Records

Listening to this excellent live album from the now legendary Nuclear Assault, I'm struck by how ahead of their time they were. With John Connolly's unique vocals, their lyrics, their hardcore influences, Nuclear Assault had a strong identity at a time when so many other thrash bands simply copied Metallica, Slayer and Megadeth.

This is a truly great live album, you can feel the molecules of air vibrate in the venue, and the atmosphere itself is electric.

This was a really happy innovative time for metal. There were no boundaries between fans and bands, both dressed the same and hung out together. Many lifelong friendships were forged. People lived in the real world, not social media, and were a lot happier for it. Good times not bad times!

Drawn from their early material, now classic tracks like 'Stranded In Hell' and 'Nuclear War' feature beside humorous hyper speed slabs of humorous hardcore like 'My America' and 'Lesbians'.

I love this album, great music, great crowd and such a happy vibe. I must also commend the excellent stories in the sleeve notes by H from Acid reign, another great band from the time that toured with Nuclear Assault. H, you need to write a book about this time!

Steve Earles

HUNG UP

S/T

Dog Records

Just when you thought you had heard it all... out comes HUNG UP. What we get here is Death Race/Holy Shite/Little Man era Dayglos riffage supplied by ex Dayglos alumni and Jaks stalwarts Hung and Willy, with ex-AWT vocalist Ratboy Roy. The bass and drums are supplied by Hayley Lupton of Zap Straps and Elena Red from Zero Coping Skills. But this ain't no Rebel Spell... this is a fucking Punk Rock Home Invasion on your life! Songs about The Streets, Drugs, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Drugs, Sketchy Chicks, Drugs, Rashes, and Living in Tents. With lyrics border lining on special needs, which actually fits here. Solos galore on this too, and once again a seriously solid rhythm section. Bands like Smut Peddlers, RKL, and early Guttermouth all come to mind with that obvious and inevitable Dayglos sound. Buy a copy of this album and play it loud! It's also the closet thing I have ever seen to the Spinal Tap LP... not too much going on like the cover except a pic of the phone Hung would use in jail.

P. Ness

Windfall – The Burning Microcosm

Once again while listening to gorenoise I was linked to a melodic black metal band! I have listened to this release before and forgot to review it so it makes sense that since I was re-linked to the album I should give it a review while I have a chance. The release I am speaking of is "The Burning Microcosm" by Windfall! It was released in 2023 by Sons of Hell Prod. on CD and tape and was uploaded for our listening pleasure at the Black Metal Promotion account on YouTube!

First off this is your standard BM but it has solid production and tight musicianship. The vocals are on point and atmospheric, the guitar work is immaculate with cold tones and shredding riffs and the percussion pounds on with all the force of a winter storm raging upon your doorstep!

The Burning Microcosm features 6 tracks in under 40 minutes so the songs are on the longer spectrum—which is standard. The polar opposite of most goregrind and gorenoise and grindcore—but each genre has its pros!

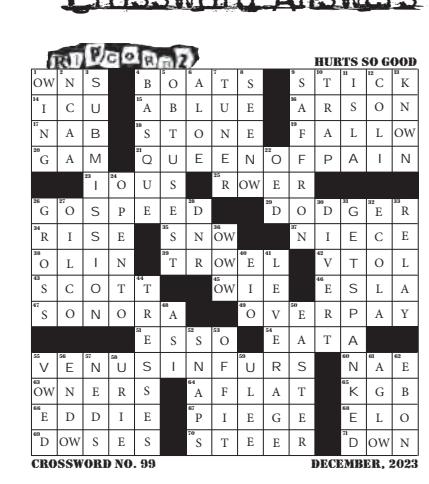
You can check this out on YouTube or you could buy a copy physically from the label mentioned above. You can also check the band out on Facebook, Instagram, Bandcamp or the Metal Archives!

Lastly—this is some pretty good black metal. The vibe is spot on and again everything is put together nicely. This is something that both new and life-long fans of BM should enjoy—and I wouldn't doubt that anything new or older from Windfall is just as good!

Devin J. Meaney

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Crossword Answers



CROSSWORD NO. 99

DECEMBER, 2023



TRENCHRAID

War Mentality

Interview with Coleman Ingram(Vox)

By Brady Tighe

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today and what do you do?

Trenchraids: You are talking to Coleman and I am the vocalist for Trenchraids.

AU: Who else is in the band?

TR: There is Hesher on guitar, Al on drums, and Patrick on bass.

AU: How would you describe the band's sound?

TR: Motor-riffs and yelling into the void. Very straightforward d-beat punk with some R'n'R swagger.

AU: Can you give us a brief history of the band?

TR: We formed after a series of chance encounters in our small community on the Sunshine Coast. Hesher and I had recently moved over from Vancouver and we recognized each other from gigs in the city and mutual friends, so we started hanging. He had been writing and demo-ing songs himself and mentioned he'd like to put something together. I've never been in a band, so I took a bit of coaxing and thought, "what

from the first jam, and knew this was going to be a thing we wanted to pursue.

AU: What are some of your sonic influences?

TR: There's plenty. We all like heaps of different music and it all influences the songs to one degree or another, but most obviously I'd say the combined musical lineage of Motörhead and Discharge, and all the various bands and sub-genres that entails.

AU: What can you tell us about the new album, War Mentality?

TR: War Mentality is the result of a really active period through the fall of 2022: It was after the demo came out and we had started gigging. We were constantly writing new songs, testing them out at shows, scrapping some, or changing them,

the hell, I'll give it a try." Patrick and Al came along pretty much from the old "band shirt club" of approaching a stranger with a cool shirt, or buying a cool album in a record shop. It's small town stuff. Finding people around here who are into this music and want to jam is rare, so you don't take it for granted like you might in the city. Anyways, we all clicked right away,

and then by the time February of this year rolled around, we whittled it down to the 12 songs on the record. There's still another 6 or 7 songs we'd written and either played live or at least jammed that are floating around and may get re-purposed or left behind. So it was a really productive time and there was a lot of momentum. I think part of it was the excitement of a new project and also the pent-up energy of the pandemic, and just being inspired by the friendships that were forming out of our collective collaboration. As for the songs themselves, unfortunately there's no shortage of inspiration right now for the kind of angry and aggressive music we make. There's always a lot of strife in the world, but I feel like this record came into being and arrived at a particularly bleak and difficult time, and I hope it offers something for people trying to make sense of it and get through, or at least bang their head and maybe forget it for a few moments.

AU: What were some of your favourite experiences recording the record?

TR: We did it in-house at our jam spot in Gibsons, which is also where our drummer Al lives. So

writing and recording was great. It was just hanging out in the space, either as a group or in pairs, as we worked through it. And then getting together there to listen to new mixes from our guy Rob Lawless in Edmonton, tweak things, and get stoked on them was a cool part of the process as well.

AU: What new songs do you enjoy the most?

TR: It changes from day to day, but I think my current favorite musically is "Disregulated," because

it's just an absolute steam-roller; and as someone who only just started writing songs last year, I'm pretty proud of "Trenches." I think as the closer, it really wraps the themes of the record up nicely.



AU: What's your current favourite song to play live?

TR: Probably "Never Surrender." That song was written in the immediate aftermath of the Bulletfarm in Vancouver closing its doors. Out of the first four shows we ever played, only one of the four venues is left, and that's Sunny Chibas in Squamish. We lost a spot in Gibsons called 'Postrophe, the Kami in Kamloops stopped booking, and then Bulletfarm. So this song is a sort of rally cry to keep going and just getting to play it on a stage feels like an act of defiance to the various forces that constantly push these important and creative DIY spaces out.

AU: If you had to pick anything to be the "Best of the Year," what would you pick?

TR: I'm sure all four of us would have different picks, but right now mine is probably "The Land, The Water, The Sky" by Black Belt Eagle Scout from Washington.

AU: Favourite local bands you want to promote?

TR: Was just saying recently how western Canada is on fire this fall, and for once in a good way. New releases from Deathknell, Headcheese, Extensive Slaughter, Phane, Alien Boys, Half Dead, Torcher, Voltage, and Conmoción all crush.

AU: Any upcoming shows and tours?

TR: We have a local album release show in Sechelt with DOA on Dec. 8th, and then a benefit for the DTES with Phane and Total Shock in Vancouver on Dec. 16. Tentative plans to get into the prairies next spring, but nothing solid yet.

AU: Where can people find you online?

TR: We're on the gramz at @trenchraids.ssc



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EIGHT'o'EIGHT &BENCH



SERMON Of Golden Verse Interview with Band Creator Him By Brady Tighe

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today and what do you do?

Sermon: I am Him, the creator of Sermon. I am the songwriter, guitar player, vocalist, and keyboardist.

AU: Give us a brief history of your band.

S: Sermon exists because I was trying to get through my Dad's terminal illness. I've said it before that songwriting is a bit of an annoying companion, and has been one of mine since childhood. You just can't get rid of it. However, during that period all the songs from the first album served as a cathartic outlet for dealing with death of a loved one.

AU: Who else is in the band?

S: Technically just James Stewart (Decapitated/Vader/Belphegor), but I think special mention should be made of Scott Atkins of Grindstone Studio, who produced, engineered, mixed and mastered the records we've done so far. He very much brings the binding to all the ideas, and is crucial to how people interpret them.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

S: It's metal with a grand sense of space. There's

an emphasis on drums and vocals to carry the songs. The guitars tend to support these two things, rather than steal the show. Sermon is very much not a slave to the riff, but more to the song.

AU: What's the most memorable gig your band has played?

S: We've only done one, and it was at Prog In Park; supporting Opeth, Alcest, Tesseract. It was pretty terrifying, however by the end I feel like we won the crowd over somewhat (well, they at least didn't boo, and we got a higher review rating than Dream Theater the next day, which was great for me.). I'd love to play live more often, but it's something of a financial nightmare that I don't know how to get around.

AU: What's the last perfect record you listened to?

S: Fontaines DC - Skinty Fia. A gorgeous post-punk record from a group of extraordinarily talented guys who are fiercely proud of their Irish heritage. The album is inventive, epic and beautiful. Some people find Grian Chattens vocals hard to overcome, but I think it's perfect and he may be the best new lyricist I know of.

AU: What's the weirdest thing you've seen in public recently?

S: I live in Peckham in London, and every day on Rye Lane you are almost guaranteed to see something you've probably never seen before. I saw a man shopping for fish with his snake round his neck the other day.

Other things like giant live snails in boxes on the street, butchers wheeling whole animal carcasses in trolleys and a variety of enthusiastic street preachers screaming into their crappy portable speakers adorn the street every day. You never quite know what's going to happen. But it's a fabulous place to live. Truly exciting and you're touching fingertips with every type of person imaginable.

AU: Your music evokes a grand sense of scope, where does that come from?

S: I think it's just what I want to hear. I tend to write what I feel I'm not hearing enough of and that generally means something big, epic, visceral, and hopefully a little catchy. If I had any self-control, I think I would like to write pop music. Unfortunately I also love blast beats.

AU: Any shows or tours planned?

S: Potentially a run of the UK/Ireland next year with a US band that I can't name just yet. Would

love for it to happen though, but I also don't want to play this music in the back of a pub.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

Watch Queer Eye after a horror movie, it really helps put the anxiety at bay.

sermonsound.com



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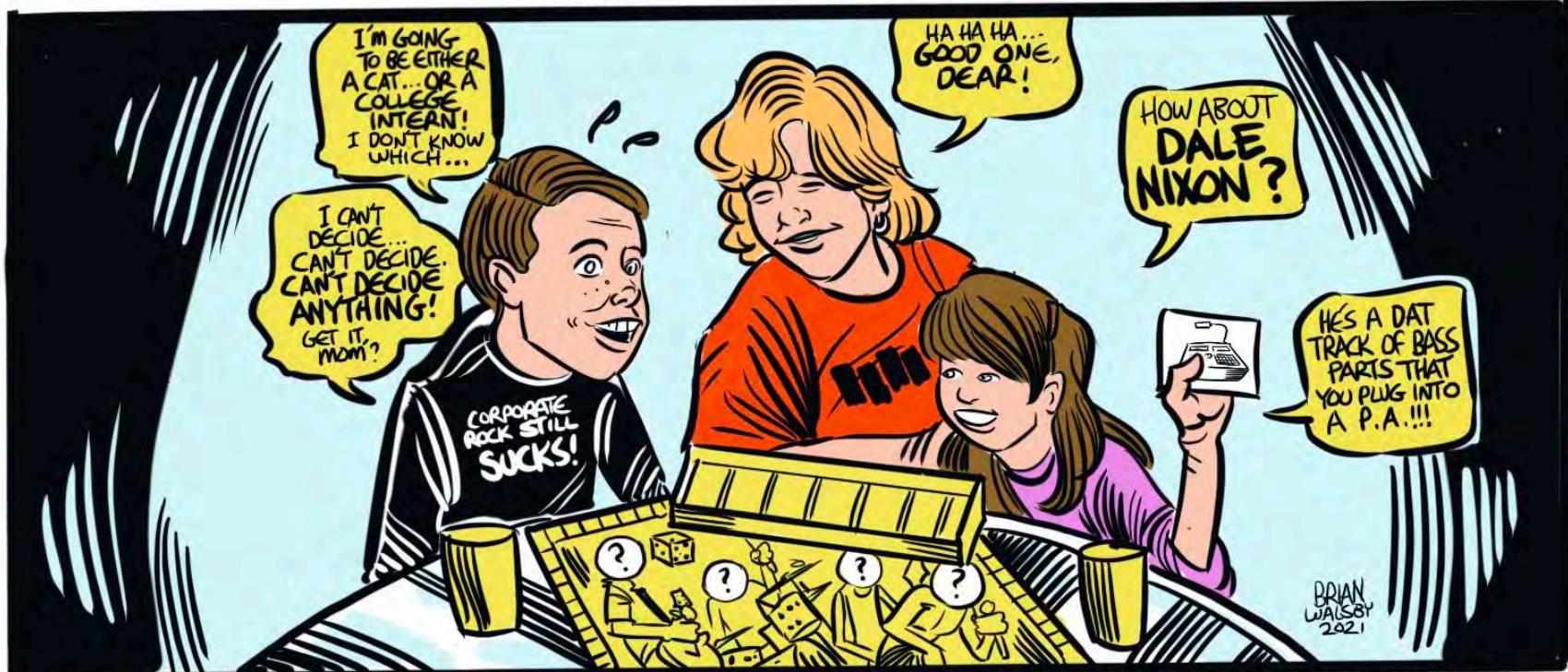


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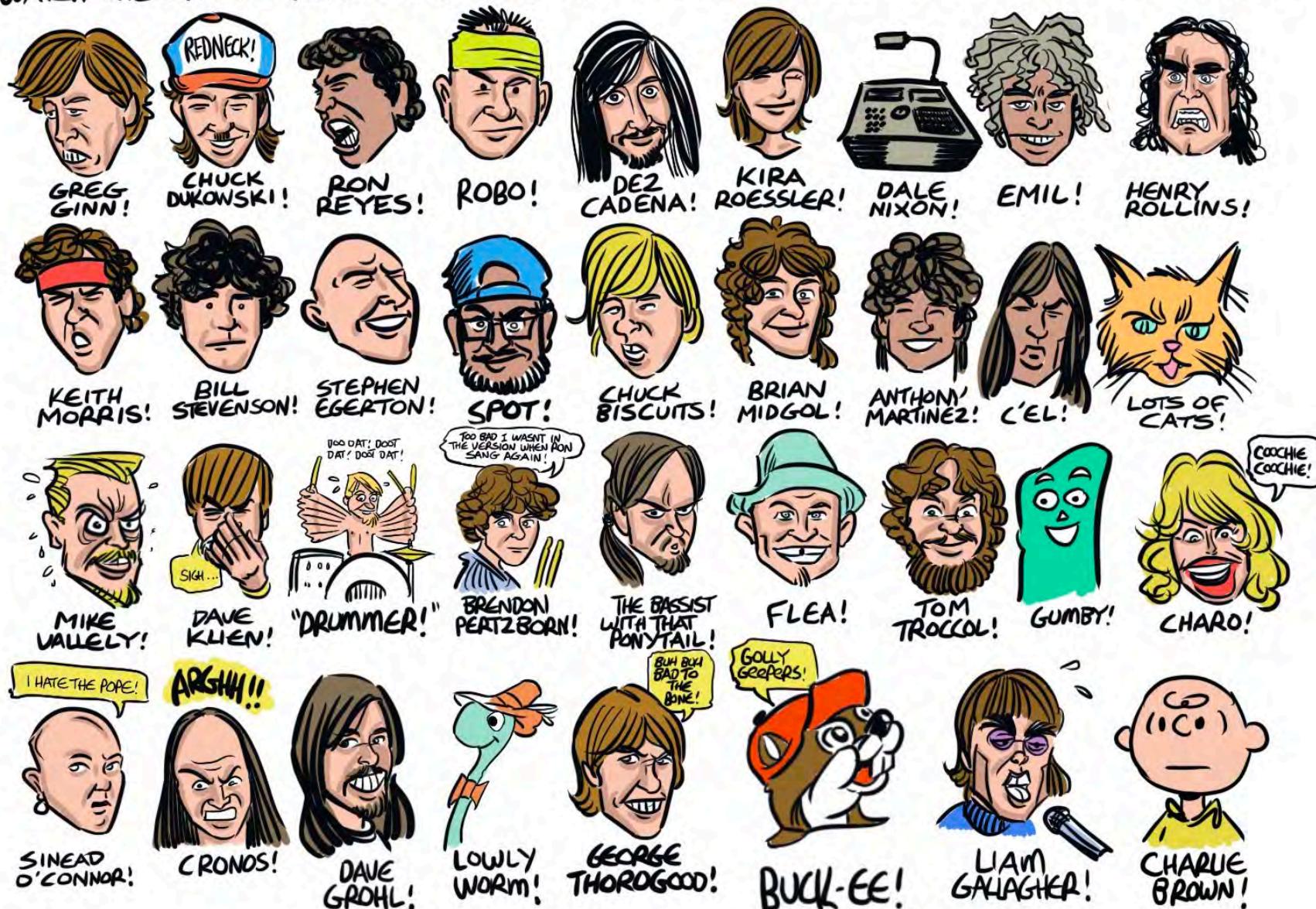
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COMIC-GEDDON

How to be Naughty with Krampus

By Ed Sum

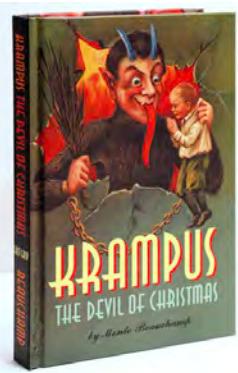
Just how many graphic novels or illustrated collections contain an appearance of Krampus depends on who you ask. As this history has been detailed by more than one author for Absolute Underground Magazine over the years (including my own back in the 2020 Christmas issue,) I've often wondered who else loves retelling this monster's story or has incorporated the lore into another comic book universe? Mike Magnolia is no stranger to the lore, as evidenced when Hellboy crossed paths with him in Hellboy Krampusnacht! He also battled Spawn, and both these one-shots were published back in 2017!

What I offer here is what I feel is definitive for this season, with some good news on where to find certain releases! The summaries are from Goodreads or Amazon, and I follow up with notes where appropriate.

Krampus, The Devil of Christmas HC (2010; Last Gasp)

By Monte Beauchamp

In the early Christmas traditions of Europe, the "Krampus" was St. Nicholas' dark servant — a hairy, horned, supernatural beast whose pointed ears and long slithering tongue gave misbehavers the creeps! This new and improved edition includes an introduction, a historical survey of the character, and over 180 lavish pre-World War I Krampus postcard images.



Twas the Night Before Krampus: A Tale of St. Nicholas (2013)

By Tim Baron and Ben Avery

You've heard the legend of "'jolly ol' St. Nicholas,'" but do you know the truth? St. Nick is real, and he ain't jolly. An endless cosmic brawl between Nicholas and his vile Holiday counterpart, Krampus, will come to a cataclysmic head this snowy Christmas Eve. But this year, only one will emerge victorious. Can St. Nicholas save Christmas Day? Or will this Eve forever be known as "'The Night Before Krampus'"?



The cool part of this collection is that it is available as a free download from the writer himself! It's available at timbaron.com/krampus

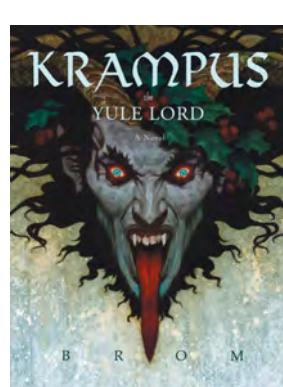
Krampus! (IDW Comics; 2014)

Meet the Krampus, yuletide terror and punisher of wicked children. Long imprisoned for his outdated methods, the holiday horror suddenly finds himself freed and tasked with a mission: recover the stolen power of the Secret Society of Santa Clauses! With his flying wolf Stutgaard, the Krampus crosses the globe, encountering various figures of winter lore and uncovering a sinister scheme to topple the Santas and change Christmas as we know it forever.

Krampus The Yule Lord HC (2015; HarperCollins)

Story and Art by Brom

When a failed songwriter witnesses a strange encounter on Christmas Eve: seven figures cloaked in black beating up a man in a red Santa suit and a sleigh. When Jesse steps in, all the strange denizens disappear, leaving only a large sack. He soon discovers that Santa has stolen the magical bag of Krampus, the ancient trickster demon who punishes evildoers, and by picking it up, now he has become one of Krampus' followers. And the former Yule Lord will stop at nothing to reclaim his holiday, and return wild magic to the desperately poor denizens of Boone County.

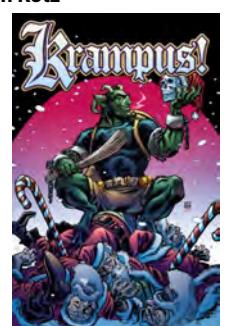


Krampus Shadow of Saint Nicholas Graphic Novel (Image; Legendary Comics)

Also reprinted as Krampus: A Yuletide Adventure Paperback (2022; Oni Press)

By Brian Joines and Dean Kotz

From the official summary: Meet the Krampus, yuletide terror and punisher of wicked children. Long imprisoned for his outdated methods, the holiday horror suddenly finds himself freed and tasked with a mission: recover the stolen power of the Secret Society of Santa Clauses! With his flying wolf Stutgaard, the Krampus crosses the globe, encountering various figures of winter lore and uncovering a sinister scheme to topple the Santas and change Christmas as we know it forever.



The good news concerning this popular take is that creators Brian Joines and Dean Kotz confirm they're working on a sequel, slated to be published in 2024!





theinvisibleorange.com

THE INVISIBLE ORANGE

A Look Back at 2023

Hey there, fellow headbangers and lovers of the extreme and underground arts! I am Mayo from The Invisible Orange, a Canadian concert promoter based in Vancouver. The Invisible Orange is your trusty purveyors of all things heavy, loud, and awesome, and we hit a major milestone in 2023 by cranking 100 events across different cities. That's right, 100! This includes concerts we were part of directly as promoter or co-promoter or indirectly as partners or sponsor, as well as community events such as eight instances of The Invisible Market. We got metal, industrial, psych, stoner, punk, hardcore, synth-pop, post-punk among the different flavours of music. We recognize that this was an extremely busy year for music, as our fellow promoters in BC had banger years as well. An example of this is our comrades at Journeyman Productions that ended the year with an expansion in operations.

But that's not all, folks, we are not done. The Invisible Orange isn't content with just looking back. No sir, we are gearing up to make 2024 a year to remember. Why, you ask? Because it's our 15th anniversary, and we've got some serious plans in the works. So, what's the secret to The

2024 can bring. Cheers to a year filled with ear-shattering riffs, bone-crushing breakdowns, and unforgettable moments.

And hold onto your leather jackets because 2024 is going to be one hell of a ride as we celebrate our 15th anniversary in style. Keep your eyes peeled, your horns raised, and your ears ready for what's to come because The Invisible Orange wants to see you enjoy the music and events that make you happy, and we want to do ride this adventure together!



Invisible Orange's standing strong after 15 years, you ask? Well, it's all about passion, dedication, and a deep love for the underground scene. We aren't just event organizers; we're fans first and foremost, who live and breathe the music and want to see local scenes thrive. So, here's to the memories we made in 2023 and the excitement of what



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AWKWARD A/C

Interview and photo by Olivia and Jay Flett

AU: Who are you and describe your sound?

Awkward A/C: We are Awkward A/C, and we shitty punk, heavy metal.

AU: How long have you been a band and how many members have you had?

A/C: Close to 10 years and only 14 members. We had to trim the fat many times.

AU: How have you found the music scene and punk scene in Nanaimo overall?

A/C: It was strong after covid and for a small town the support all bands get is super rad. We have all played and play in different bands from metal to punk and more and see support at all the shows and often there is multiple options at different venues on the same night.

AU: You guys already have a couple records out anything new coming?

A/C: Yeah, we are going to work on an EP this coming year we definitely have some songs cooking just need to finish them and we have a couple new ones on our current set list that will probably make the EP. Or I mean, fuck, we may just make another full length record.

AU: Favourite show or shows?

A/C: Our first album release with the Dayglo's in 2019 was killer, and had the highest liquor sales in Cambie history. The all-weed show at the dispensary with DGA when Jay first joined the band was hilarious: he got a full hot-box high and forgot all the lyrics. But really so many great shows with so many great bands. Mexico was unreal too.

AU: What have things been like post covid shutdowns?

A/C: Some shows aren't as well attended it seems

TERMINAL SESSIONS



due to inflation; people just have less money to blow. So, people are forced to choose what shows they attend now when before it was they all had good numbers. A lot more sober people now too so maybe not everyone is into the bar vibe.

AU: Biggest influence musically?

A/C: Motörhead overall, and Lemmy's ideals when writing. Like we want to write songs that most people can relate to, but also aren't all the exact same every album. We had a heavier sound last record and that may change next time. We'll see.

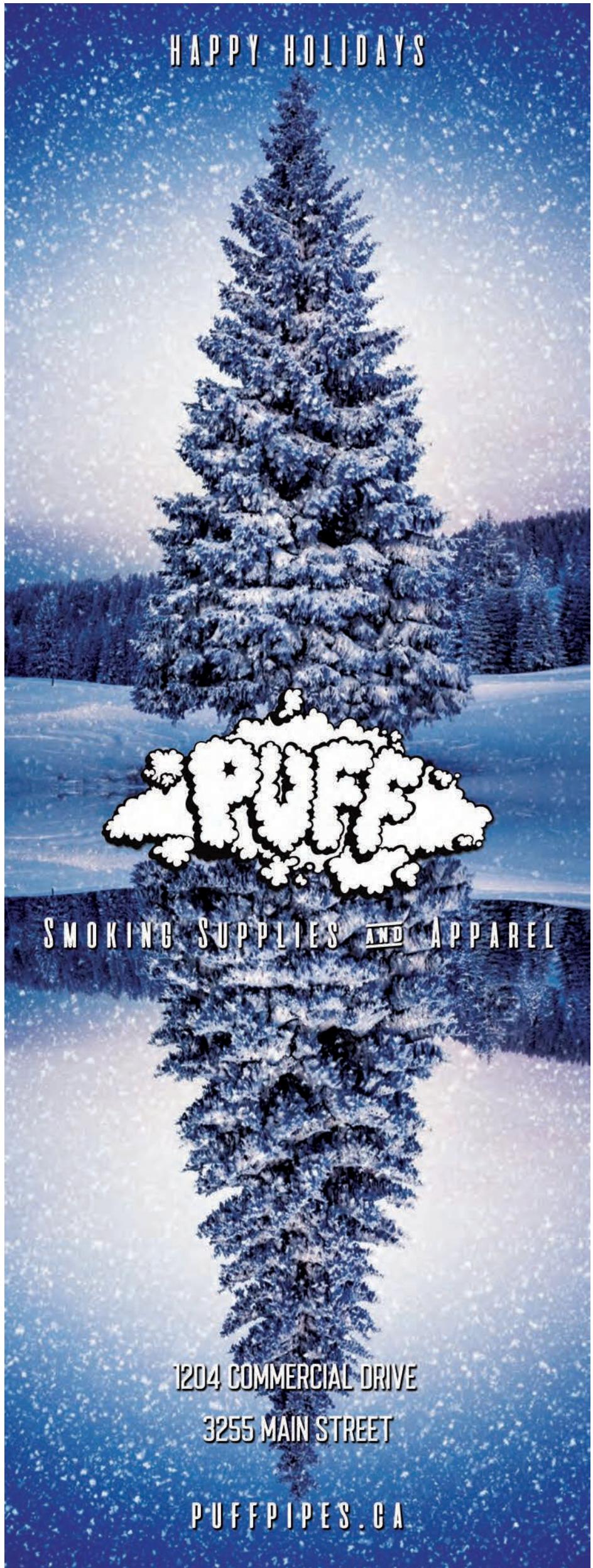
AU: Who should have died, Lars or Cliff?

A/C: KIRK!

AU: Any future plans for the band?

A/C: Write an EP, touring Japan would be rad, and to write faster and heavier.





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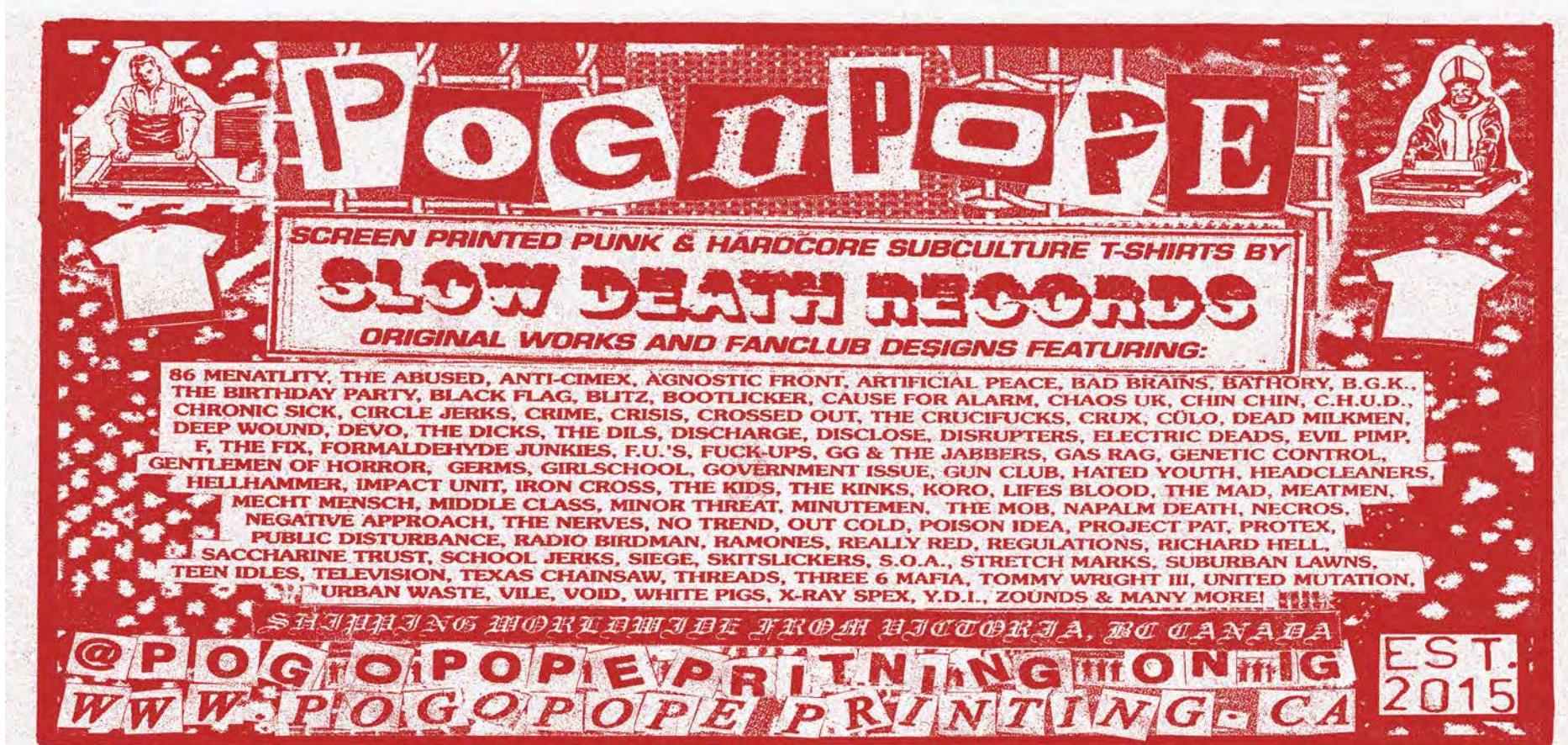
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LITTLE FERNWOOD

Interview with Event Promoter

Tyler Akis

By John Carlow

Absolute Underground: Please Introduce yourself?

Tyler Akis: My name is Tyler Akis. I am a first-year board member at The Fernwood Community Association and long-time event promoter in Victoria. I currently play in Pooched and Mediated Form but my previous bands include Sixbrewbantha, Collagen, Kraxxa, and Dummy Pops to name a few.

AU: What is the venue we are talking about today?

TA: We are talking about Paul Phillips Hall at 1923 Fernwood Rd. Better known as Little Fernwood.

AU: When did the space start hosting underground shows originally?

TA: Gigs have been happening on and off at the space since the mid 90's. I am sure there is someone reading this who knows better than I do, but since I started attending gigs in 2003 I have always been aware of Little Fernwood and its impact on the local arts scene.

AU: Tell us a bit about the space.

TA: Little Fernwood is a small, low barrier community theater in the heart of Fernwood that provides a space for theater, live music, artist talks, really whatever else someone can dream up to use the space for (shout out to yoga babies). There is also a small art gallery out front which showcases one artist a month.

AU: Who has played there?

TA: Well for me the most iconic punk gig at Little Fernwood of the past 20 years would probably have to be when UK crust punk pioneers Deviated Instinct absolutely leveled the place on one fateful night in September of 2010. At the time Black Raven Records was right across the street in

BACKSTAGE PASS - VENUE PROFILE

Fernwood Square and the culmination of everything made for one hell of an evening. Though it doesn't surprise me that shortly after that, the space took a hiatus from booking extreme music acts for the better part of a decade.

Some notable punk and hardcore acts who have played the space: Botch, Render Useless, Reversal of Man, DBS, Hot Hot Heat, Vincat, Malefaction, Iskra, Bury What's Dead, Contagium, Closet Monster, and we hosted some of the early editions of Victoria Noise Fest.

AU: In the last couple of years shows have resurfaced in the space. What got that off the ground?

TA: What's funny is the first show I ever played at Little Fernwood was "The Resurrection of Little Fernwood," in 2006, and reflecting on that now, it's really funny to answer this "Resurrection" question 17 years later. To be honest I am not exactly sure what got it off the ground, but it has been great to have as an option for all-ages music events in the city. However, like everything nice, and like every event space in Victoria, we have gone from zero to one-hundred with bookings at the space. I really hope people reading this and the bookers, bands, and the audience members of the greater music community understand how special this

Little Fernwood is and to take time to recognize that the longevity of the space is completely in the hands of the community. And for the love of God don't smoke out back during bands, and clean up your butts!

AU: Capacity ? Technical specs?

TA: Small stage, plus lighting, plus PA, and cheap. No jerks.

Official capacity is 65, no sound tech is available, but a full PA system will be available starting in the new year.

AU: Anything to add?

TA: We are just your



friendly neighborhood community theater. If folks are interested in becoming members of The Fernwood Community Association, they can register online and have voting rights at our future annual general meetings so they can share their thoughts with all involved.

AU : Where can people contact you about bookings ?

TA: thefca.ca

Photos by Finding Charlotte Photography



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SHANE PATRICK LYSAGHT MACGOWAN

**Born December 25th 1957
Pembury UK**

**Died November 30th 2023
Dublin Ireland**

By Chuck Andrews

When I was twenty, I discovered the Pogues. Songs such as "Boys from the County Hell", "The Auld Triangle" and "The Sick Bed of Cuchulainn" became instant favourites of mine. I had never heard anything quite like them before and over twenty years later, I still haven't. The combination of Shane MacGowan's incredibly raw lyrics and the punk-meets-folk-meets-Celtic music was perfect. Did the Pogues spawn a ton of Celtic punk bands? Sure, but nobody wrote words like

Shane did. Nobody, not even close.

"When you pissed yourself in Frankfurt and got syph down in Cologne

And you heard the rattling death trains as you lay there all alone

Frank Ryan bought you whiskey in a brothel in Madrid

And you decked some fucking black shirt who was cursing all the Yids"

-Sick Bed of Cuchulainn

I remember playing the Hell's Ditch album for my mom; she loved the music but wasn't much into the lyrics or the fact

that Shane actually sounds noticeably drunk on that record. My mom never has been into rock music

mind you, save for the Beatles, but the Pogues were not in any way simple rock or punk. There

was so much light and beauty in their music, along with deep darkness and simultaneous sunshine in his words.



I was one of the lucky folks who not just saw the Pogues twice, but saw Shane, and of course the rest of the group, turn in wonderful sets filled with classics each time. Did each adventure to see the Pogues involve tons of chaos? Of course it did! But I wouldn't have had it any other way. And something tells me Shane wouldn't have led life any other way. I certainly make no claims to have known the guy, but he wrote some incredible songs, and seemed to live a very full life. He will not be forgotten anytime soon.

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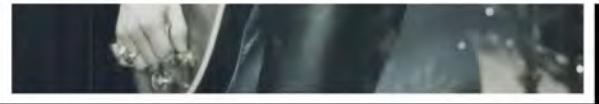
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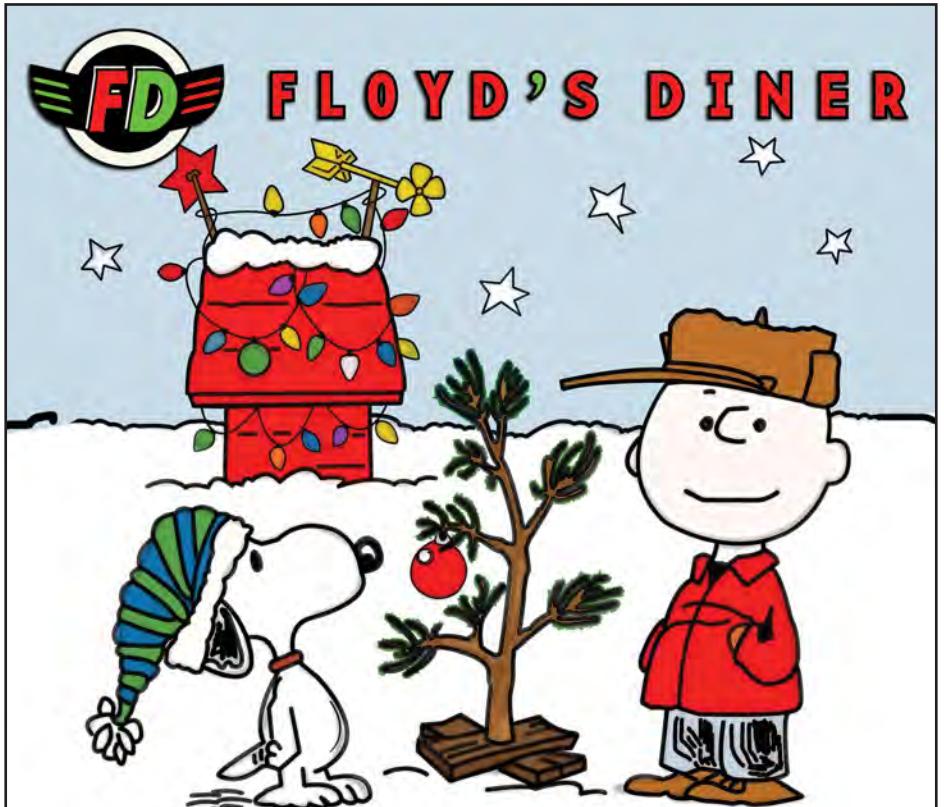
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